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ABSTRACT

Despite the fact that the middle school has frequently come into being for noneducational reasons, many educators maintain that if a new school system could be organized from "scratch" with nothing but educational desiderata to guide its creators, the middle school would be the foundational arch of the system. This report analyzes and describes this fast-increasing link in the educational ladder. Included in the portrait are data concerning middle school organizational designs and schedules; the distinctive traits and needs of its pupils; and its purposes, characteristics, salient features, potentialities, instructional needs and styles, and facilitative building services. (Author/JF)

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THE MIDDLE SCHOOL
AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME

The Task Force on Intermediate Education
In the State of New Jersey

1973

New Jersey School Development Gouncil
Graduate School of Education
Rutgers University

Thornton Wilder, in *Our Town:*

"Every time a child is born into the world, it's nature's attempt to make a perfect human being."

Note: It's also the school's opportunity and privilege to help.

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The Middle School
An Idea Whose Time Has Come

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FOREWORD

An Innovation with Possibilities

It is with pleasure, and with recognition of its possibilities in providing high-quality education for boys and girls passing through the anxiety fraught years of early adolescence, that the N.J.S.D.C. makes available this publication aptly titled *The Middle School: An Idea Whose Time Has Come*.

For more than six decades educators have firmly believed in the concept of an intermediate school, to serve as a bridge between the elementary school, with its emphasis on the acquisition of tool skills, and the high school, with its stress appropriately placed upon career responsibilities and the use of those skills. The junior high school designed to serve the physical, intellectual, psychological, and social characteristics of young folk moving turbulently and rapidly from childhood to adolescence, has long been the major example of the intermediate school. The junior high school will remain with us, for many communities have found that it effectively meets their needs. But now, on the horizon, actively claiming supporters, is an alternative intermediate institution, called the middle school, which typically returns the ninth grade to the high school and dips lower into the elementary school to include the sixth grade with the seventh and eighth grades. Sometimes even the fifth grade is included.

For those districts considering the creation of a middle school, and for districts seeking to adapt their institution more precisely to the researched characteristics of pre-adolescents, this publication will prove eminently valuable. Hence the Council has believed it to be part of its function to sponsor its preparation and its distribution.

The project had its inception in the New Jersey Middle School Principals' Work Conference in January, 1968, and received the enthusiastic endorsement of the Junior High School Committee (NJAASP), in April, 1968.

The State Department of Education responded to the expressed need for further study of the middle school idea by formally organizing *The Task Force on Middle School Education*, with the active support of the Secondary School Principals Association, the Elementary School Principals Association, and the Association of School Administrators.

The N.J.S.D.C. funded the study and were deeply involved in its production commitment to publication, and dissemination.

INTRODUCTION

An Opportunity for Imaginative Approaches

For more than a half-century educators, with the help of their public, have worked to provide a better organization for those transitional grades which lie between the basic elementary school preparation and the high school.

In the early years of the century the American pattern of education was an eight-grade elementary school, sometimes preceded by a kindergarten, and a four-year high school. The weakest point in the educational ladder, in the view of many observers and appointed study commissions, was the seventh and eighth grades, which seemed to mark a period of review of the work of the first six grades rather than an advance into new and deeper learnings and skills. The recommendation was that secondary education should be lowered into the seventh and eighth grades, to enrich the curriculum with vitality, depth, and variety.

Since that time various organizational patterns have been tried, to make more effective the education that provides the transition between the basic elementary school and the high school. Coupled with the desire to achieve a more rigorous academic curriculum was the hope that the segment of population undergoing the throes of early adolesence could be grouped together.

For these, and other often-localized reasons – including racial balance, economy, relief of existing buildings, construction plans, and political feasibility – a variety of organizational structures has come into being. One can find, on the American scene, systems using a 4-4-4 graded plan, a 5-3-4 plain, a 6-2-4 plan, a 6-3-3 plan, or a 6-6 plan. The most popular up to the present time, have been the 6-3-3 plan, which includes the 7-8-9 grades as a junior high school, and the 6-6 plan, which contains a six-year secondary school building, within which some or many aspects of the junior high school organization might be visible.

Present and persistent attention now seems centered on what has come to be called "the middle school," typically containing grades 6-7-8, and sometimes 5-6-7-8. Frequently the "middle school" has come into being for reasons not essentially educational, with later attempts to make its existence both rational and meaningful, and most appropriate for the wholesome development of boys and girls entering puberty, with all the physical, psychological, physiological, social, and intellectual stresses which that life-span contains.

Yet, despite the fact that the middle school structure has been adopted in many localities for non-educational reasons, there is a growing body of educators who state, "If we could organize a new school system from 'scratch' with nothing but educational desiderata to guide us, we would make the middle school the foundational arch of our system."

It is the purpose of this report to analyze and describe this fast-increasing link in our educational ladder: its purposes, its characteristics, its salient features, its potentialities, its curricular and extracurricular opportunities, the distinctive traits and needs of its pupils, its organizational designs and schedules, its instructional needs and styles, and its facilitative building services.

The middle school, as of the present moment, is fluid, offering unlimited and unprecedented opportunities for imaginative, plausible, and pilot approaches to effective and broadened instruction appropriate to the known and suspected characteristics of a pre-adolescent age group whose stage of development, and institutional locus, lie between the basic elementary school and the four-year high school.

It is the place, today, where educational statemanship can express itself advantageously for the benefit of the entire school system. It will not be an easy task. It can be, however, our best opportunity to meld together our best theories and our best practices, both in keeping with the purposes of education and the characteristics of children being served.

Chairman, H. Richard Conover
Director, William A. Cuff
Facilitator, Lawrence Kaplan, Ed. D.
Task Force on Middle School Education, Steering Committee

CHAPTER I

The Schools in the Middle: An Historical Approach

The middle school . . . seems to draw strength and corroboration from a long, long look at the nature and needs of both children and society in the "now" environment.

Since the turn of the century America has recognized and faced the fact that youth in the early stages of adolesence has special needs and problems in bridging the gap between the elementary and the high school.

The junior high school, therefore, was and is a sincere and desirable attempt to provide an appropriate transition between the elementary and high schools.

It did succeed in moving secondary education down into grades seven and eight, and attach it with more precision both to the ninth grade (always considered the first year of the recorded high school structure) and to the sixth grade (where the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic were presumably sufficiently established to be usable for varied educational purposes.)

After its acceptance as an educational unit, the rate of pupil retention did rise appreciably. Whereas, before 1920, only one in three students even attempted to enter the ninth grade, in the years that followed practically all students moved automatically into the ninth grade and with greater frequency and confidence into the upper high school levels.

It is true, also, that the junior high schools emphasized their expressed "exploratory" functions, through their varied unified arts programs, introductory languages, guidance, interest clubs and activities, purposeful groupings, and curricular choices and electives.

There was, in the new school unit, much greater attention to individual and group guidance, with a resultant better articulation with high school program.

The organization of the junior high school permitted, too, the gradual "weaning" of the elementary school pupil from the overly-protective self-contained classroom with comprehensive generalized instruction, to the specialization and complete departmentalization that is characteristic of the high school.

Finally, the junior high school was designed, in all of its organizational, structural, and instructional aspects, to meet appropriately the needs, abilities, interests, and nature of young people entering and passing through the early stages of adolescence.

In other words, the junior high school – America's first and most popular intermediate school – was designed to meet better the educational and growth development of pre-adolescents and early adolescents. Every kind of intermediate school – and the 5-8 and 6-8 middle school fall within this broad classification – is activated by the same desire.

But times have changed. It is probable that pupils and needs and educational know-how have also been undergoing changes.

The retention problem is no longer an important factor.

And the high school has increasingly regretted the loss of the ninth grade as part of its organization. Many high schools like to include ninth-grade courses as part of the college passport. The high school faculty and departments, it is asserted, are better organized and more specialized in their academic backgrounds than are junior high school staffs, and are hence able more effectively to provide the essential foundations of sequential cognitive development.

The Middle School Now Demands Consideration

It is claimed, now, that the really critical transition points in today's educational progression lie between the fifth and the sixth grades and between the eighth and the ninth grades. The sixth, seventh, and eighth grades comprise the territory that spans the transitional space between elementary and secondary education.

It is claimed that the early-adolescent characteristics which formerly made the seventh, eighth, and ninth grade pupils a viable grouping now point, by the same criteria, to a sixth, seventh, and eighth grade combination – and offer some support for even a 5-6-7-8 organization.

It is doubtless true that any educational agency – even one that begins as almost a total innovation – gradually absorbs, along with stability, traditional ways of thinking and acting. When rapid cataclysmic changes occur in the educational environment – as they have today – it is sometimes easier to initiate a new organization with built-in innovations, than to attempt wholesale adaptations in the former organization. Such possibilities as team teaching, modular scheduling, independent study, learning laboratories, non-graded classes, individual programming, relevant student activities, remedial intensity, and integration of subject matter are difficult to insinuate, and to be assimilated, rapidly in an established educational program.

Some persons have permitted the word "junior" in junior high school to color adversely their thinking about the unit. They contend that the name encourages the institution to become a miniature high school, with colorations which militate against many of the original aims of the junior high school.

Yet in many communities the junior high school has proved its worth. It has remained true to its purposes, adapted to meet present conditions. It has earned the confidence and approval of its publics. Its principals and staffs have earned their reputation as representative of education's finest practitioners and instructional innovators.

In such communities its survival is certain. It will continue to make its wholesome and imperative contributions.

But today, as communities, for diverse reasons, ponder new organizational patterns, there is reason to look at the possibilities resident in the "middle school," with its 6-7-8 or its 5-6-7-8 span of grades.

The middle school, as described and analyzed in this report, seems to draw strength and corroboration from a long, long look at the nature and needs of both children and society in the "now" environment.

CHAPTER II

The pupils of the Middle School: A Profile View
The Middle School Is Broadly Defined

Through experimental independence – often very aggravating and almost incomprehensible – the youngster moves from childish dependence in the direction of adult interdependence.

Every definition of a "middle school" emphasizes the children to be served. The many characteristics deemed desirable for a middle school flow from the nature, needs, and abilities of the pupils enrolled.

One can accept, as representative, this defining description: "The middle school provides a program planned for a range of older children, pre-adolescents, and early adolescents that builds upon the elementary school program for early childhood and in turn is built upon by the high school's program for adolescents."

Thus, before one can discuss programs, instructional techniques, building facilities, or even curricular objectives and substance, one must consider and analyze the characteristics of the in-between-aged child for whose educational welfare the school is designed. There is a growing amount of research available now, to afford a fairly comprehensive picture and profile of the middle school pupil.

There is agreement that children undergo a turbulent transition from childhood to adolescence in the middle school years. The period typically lasts from three to five years, within the grades five-to-eight span. This grouping includes those, typically, who are from 10 to 14 years of age.

The Group's Physical Characteristics

Although middle-school pupils are, physically, passing through the same period of development, there are great variations in stages and phases. Somewhere between their eighth and fourteenth birthdays (a year or more later for boys than for girls, on the average), nearly all children experience pubescence, the initiation of sexual maturation. Inevitably, in every grade of the middle school, there will be a mixture of children, pubescents, and adolescents. The word "transescents" has been coined to categorize the entire group, within which there may be tremendous ranges in every aspect of physical, intellectual, social, and emotional growth.

In these children – and it is indeed a disturbing, anxiety-fraught period for them – marked changes in body chemistry alter the activity of specific glands, activating the reproductive system and producing a number of unfamiliar side effects. Skeletal growth changes, formerly fairly steady and predictable, become irregular and sporadic, affecting first the cartilege structure, then bones, then muscles. The effects are often evidenced in larger hips, expanded nose and ears, deeper voice, unwieldy limbs, overtaxed heart, weight gains, and sudden spurts in height, sometimes as large as an inch per month. Interestingly, girls tend to be taller and heavier than boys up to 12 years of age; often they attain adult height at 14. Boys grow faster than girls, however, between ages 12 and 16; then they slow down. Regional, national, and climatic backgrounds often cause variations in maturation rates. Maturity differences between sexes become obvious at age 11, and peak at 14, when girls typically are two years ahead of boys in maturity.

Oil- and perspiration-producing glands gush forth unflatteringly and annoyingly. High metabolic rates demand more energy, often accompanied by increased food consumption and fatigue. The nervous system, taxed by the suddenly-changed physique, finds its outlet frequently in restlessness, tics, and poor coordination. The growth and activation of the gonads stimulate the development of breasts and the growth of body hair. Menstruation, ejaculation, and related sensations commence.

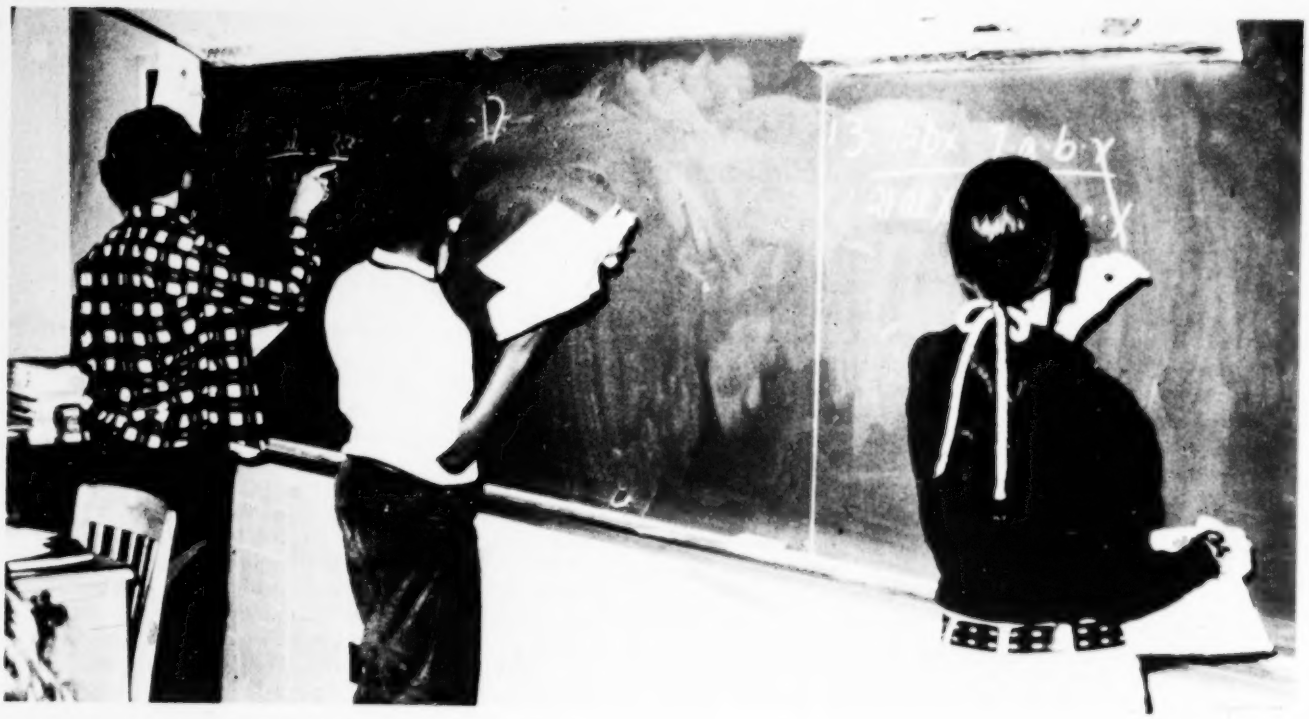
The transescent often has difficulty understanding his own unaccustomed needs for rest, exercise, and food. The bodily changes in himself and his peers are disturbing phenomena. His world is becoming complex: he realizes that his physical growth is irregular, even spasmodic; he senses in his physical movements a disturbing awkwardness; he finds himself troubled by real or imagined physical defects; his joy in competition becomes tempered by a conscious weariness and unanticipated periods of restlessness; his parents look questioningly at both his lack of appetite and his hunger cravings; he watches wonderingly the sexual changes in his body; and unexplainably his appearance becomes more improtant to him, in his associations with his peers.

In short, the middle school population, in developmental level, is much less homogeneous than either the student bodies of the elementary school or the high school.

The Group's Intellectual Characteristics

Pupils in the middle-school range tend to exhibit disinct stages of intellectual development, although the variation and divergences from the norm in every aspect of cognitive learning and experience are tremendous.

Learning, in the behavioral sense, is defined as a change in behavior as a result of activity undertaken by the learner to meet a felt need. It is often – but not always – observable and measurable. It is not restricted, in its manifestations, to



intellectual behavior. It certainly is not the exclusive domain of the school. It is conceded that learning in one area does affect one's capacity to learn in other areas, for concepts are built upon concepts, larger and broader, *ad infinitum*.

Environments, past and present experiences, and emotional state strongly influence the learning of an individual.

Behavioral psychologists, such as Piaget, have demonstrated that children typically pass, seriatim, through several stages of intellectual development. The primary school child, until about age 10, lives in a world where directly-sensed experiences are stressed. It is this stage that Piaget Calls "concrete operations." The primary school child learns the identities of things. He finds that everthing has a name; every object has some characteristics that are unique, yet possesses some attributes that are shared with other named things. The objects, which form the basis of his early learning, bear dimensions of space, mass, and time. To the primary child, the world is an orderly, sensible place. His typical question is "What is – – –"?

By the time he enters middle school, however, his intellectual powers have reached a new level. He is now ready to emphasize reflective thinking – the process of organizing concepts into a higher order of ideas. Piaget believes the middle school child is ready for – and will profit most fully from – procedures accenting abstract thinking. He now has the capacity to generalize, to place observable objects into a broad array of systems. He is able to use concepts quite apart from concrete reality, discovering that this system of thought enables him to process information, to use it rather than just to store it.

His interests seem primarily concerned with bringing order to his environment. Each thought triggers more questions, with their demand for fresher and deeper information. His intellectual development during this period is spiraled: information begets thinking and new questions, and these in turn require more pertinent information, from which arise more questions. Every day, within this stage of development, the world widens, and the child's field of consciousness expands. Piaget calls the middle school intellectual period the time of "formal operations," a higher level than the "concrete operations" which, in his view, characterize learning in the primary school. The pupil's question has changed from "What is – – –" to "Why?"

This is an active intellectual period – it perhaps is the most crucial period in the child's entire life-span, for it frequently creates the parameters which in his future will establish the limits of his involvement with the world and its affairs. The growth process of the intellect, to be most successful, will undoubtedly include temporary frustrations, failures, and fruitless approaches to answers.

The pupil in the middle school will tend to deal in generalizations, but these will often be invalid because of his limited understanding and experience. He will be curious about all manner of things, but the intensity and maintenance of his natural inquisitiveness will be largely dependent upon the nature of the curriculum and the teaching approach. He may, on the surface, exhibit an apparent intellectual sophistication due to personal experiences with travel, mass media, and varied environmental factors. Even though he formulates opinions easily, he is still intellectually malleable. Often disorganized, confused, and indecisive, he is vividly imaginative, intellectually uninhibited, and quick in verbalizing his thoughts. He questions learning experiences that seem impractical. He enjoys manipulative activities, prefers active involvement to passive recipiency, enjoys discussions with adults, has a tremendous range of literary appreciation and a predisposition for critical evaluation, and there is in him a strong desire for self-expression and creative activity.

But always it must be remembered that in middle school pupils, although their average intellectual characteristics can be itemized, growth patterns vary greatly from individual to

individual. Each pupil approaches his potential level at his own rate.

The Group's Social Development

The middle school pupil may belong to many social groups: family, gang, school, community, church, or club. In each, he will exhibit social behavior, which can be defined as the interaction between the individual and the group. How he reacts, in any specific or general situation, will depend largely upon his physique, intelligence, emotional state, or personality. Each individual possesses a set of dispositions and needs which will influence his reaction to any stimulus or collection of stimuli.

Every social group contributes in special ways to meeting the basic needs of an individual. Belonging, therefore, becomes a need in its own right. With his basic needs assured, the individual is free to express himself in his life space. Any group, by appreciating and recognizing his existence and his contributions, can give the individual a sense of selfness, complemented by group identity.

It is possible – nay, probable – that the several groups to which a youngster belongs may hold opposing role-expectations. It is often difficult for a person to be a model citizen, a scholar, a rational being, an obedient son, and a "regular fellow" at the same time. Budding physical, intellectual, and social powers, together with marked emotional changes, will cause him to seek new relationships with various people. It is during the middle school years that family influence begins to wane and peer influences begin to wax. Through experimental independence – often very aggravating and almost incomprehensible – the youngster moves from childish dependence in the direction of adult interdependence.

To enter the peer group, whose approval tends to become more important than that of his family, he buys his way using the coins of loyalty and conformity. Efforts of family and other authority figures to control his actions elicit hostility and strengthen peer-group unity. In his later teen years he finally establishes a tentative independence. His path leads him from the family controls to the gang, to the mixed group, and finally to a marriage partner and the responsibilities of a new family. But in his journey he has encountered considerable overlappings and many conflicts.

It must not be forgotten that he is also a member of an unseen audience, exposed to whatever the assorted media bring him from the larger culture. Out of all his experiences he forms a system of values which he reconstructs and refashions as new experiences impinge upon his life. The social values he perceives often outweigh intrinsic values, especially when emotion runs high.

Research points out that the middle school child has three fundamental social needs: the opportunity to make a suitable transition from dependence to interdependence, the acquisition of effective social skills, and the construction of a personal identity.

Observers of the middle school pupil admit that his social problems, needs, and aspirations are fairly distinctive. There is evident in every child a constant struggle between the pressure of academic achievement and peer conformity. Rapidly changing cultural conditions tend to widen the gap in understanding between parents and child. Peer-group influences on behavioral tendencies are obvious. Peer acceptance tends to become a necessity, and peer values tend to possess absolute validity. The pupil, as he strives for greater independence, will appear to be a challenger of establishment figures. He attempts to develop a personal style, as a signature of identity – the style may be expressed in a manner of walking, speaking, dressing, acting, or reacting. Variations in behavior – often inexplicable – apparently result from emotional and social conflicts. His friendships and convictions change rapidly. Typically his friendships are the members of his own sex, although at times he may seek greater intimacy with the opposite sex. Again typically, the female is more aggressive in this area because of her greater maturity. The mass media – newspapers, radio, television, movies, magazines, and advertisements – do much to shape his thoughts, desires, and values. He is afflicted with greater social pressures, in dating age and dating behavior, than were the young of former generations. He gradually acquires an increasing degree of social sophistication, applied differently in accordance with the social setting; e.g. home, school, club, or special occasion. He begins to display a social consciousness, and he becomes more acutely aware and analytical of the behavior of himself and others.

It is this complex, growing individual who sits in the middle school learning environment – which is, in itself, a social setting.

The Group's Emotional Development

The middle school child, as he moves through an enlarging environment with which his relationships are constantly changing, is subject to a host of motivating dispositions. They are the source of his emotional responses, which may be either positive or negative.

The emotional changes in the middle school child are really profound, chiefly because his perceptions are expanding to encompass abstractions and meditative thinking. He has become aware of things that might be. Every added bit of information inclines him toward possibilities, theories, principles, generalizations, and creative thought. Novel relationships become apparent; they are emotionally stimulating.

Responding to emotions with unaccustomed bodies and metamorphic intellects, middle schoolers show difficulty in expressing themselves in mature fashion. They experiment, in an assortment of poses ranging from uninhibited extraversion to moody contemplation; they continually test the reactions of others, and gradually they adopt satisfying response styles.

At this stage of life, the middle school child is himself his greatest mystery. He is probably more comprehensible to observers than to himself. There is in him an inchoate yearning to understand his own feelings. He wants to be reassured about life. He feels the need to try out responses in secure social settings. He realizes that his emotional responses need to be trained, fashioned to meet varied circumstances, and habituated to advantageous application. But in try-out processes his reactions may often be ungainly, threatening, and even preposterous. His emotional responses will probably assume exaggerated proportions if his out-of-school circumstances are, in his mind, inhibiting and stifling.

In the development of his self-hood – for this is the child's overriding necessity during the middle school years – he must resolve, in gradual and sometimes antagonistic steps, a host of relationships: relationships with adults, with a single individual, with his peer group, and with society. In his maturing process, the child will exhibit a congeries of known

and unknown emotional reactions.

What are middle school pupil like? Well, they're certainly variable. They can be described only as individuals, at specific times, in affective situations, and in inconstant stages of development. They can be both tolerant and cruel, argumentative and agreeable, melancholic and exuberant. They want their educational experiences to be meaningful and enlarging. They are susceptible to quickly-adopted fads, expressions, and mannerisms. They enjoy collecting and organizing activities. Their behavior patterns, as they move interchangeably in their activities between success and failure, are observable and usually indicative. Their fears, anxieties, and frustrations due to physical, sexual, and emotional maturation are visible – and it is clear that they do not understand the pleasant and unpleasant feelings they encounter in boy-girl relationships. They tend to lose their temper easily. While desirous of freedom from parents, they fear the consequent loss of security. They are embarrassed by the rapid changes in their physical development. Their self-images – although confused in some of their lineaments – are important to them, and they suffer when subjected to deflating actions or critical remarks. They exhibit anger as a loser in games, arrogance as a winner. They experience, at times, both real and imagined loneliness. They express their dislikes freely. They are mystified by the occult, by death, by uncharted space, and by the bizarre. They show signs of developing a conscience, morality standards, and sets of values. They are willing to accept the reasonable consequences of their actions, and they are constantly attempting to measure their obligations to the larger society in which they move. They are open to change and flexibility. Mischievous, they exhibit pleasure-seeking inclinations. They grow increasingly able to coexist with the ambiguity displayed by the world about them and they are confused and upset by the evidences they see. They tend to become emotionally involved with people. They are, almost unconsciously, aware of the internal and external pressures caused by society's vague and future expectations of them.

But, above all, they are aware of feeling different – different from before and different from others. They crave, amid the changes that are engulfing them, surroundings in which they can undergo the inevitable changes in security.

The Implications of Pupil Characteristics

The middle school is designed, above all other considerations, to meet the needs of the pupils in its enrollment. Within this chapter have been described the general characteristics – physical, intellectual, social, and emotional – of the middle school pupil.

What are the implications for the school, for which the pupil is the *raison d'etre?* Many will emerge from the questions below:

1. Is its enrollment limited to the three or four year span between the basic elementary school and the high school?

2. Is there a belief within the faculty and community that the characteristics of the age-group to be served are sufficiently distinctive to make advisable a custom-build program with objectives and instructional methodologies attuned to its needs?

3. With peer and adult behavior models so influential in pupils' lives at this stage of development, what implications exist for teachers?

4. What kind of instructional program is appropriate for youngsters whose spasmodic growth patterns encourage restlessness?

5. For pupils intellectually ready to deal with abstract thinking, what curricular, instructional, and organizational designs should be accepted and adopted?

6. For an age group whose values are fluid and in the process of rapid moulding, how can a program be formulated to encourage wholesome development favorable to both the individual and society?

7. Pupils of middle school age can profitably be encouraged to move into broad and wide-ranging areas of learning. How?

8. Although information will probably always have a major role to play in instruction, what are the varied and large objectives, especially appropriate to middle school children, to which the school should commit itself?

9. If children are different, expecially in rates of development, how can the program be shaped to produce maximum growth in the individual child?

10. If schools and pupils are to operate in harmony, what can the school do to emphasize abstract thinking, the understanding of principles and generalizations, the process of acquiring organizing skills, exploration of new learnings, relevant meanings, communicative skills, creative expression, interpersonal relations, wholesome boy-girl understandings, active involvement, and the growth of a philosophy of life?

11. Can the school provide the requisite time, space, and support for interests and hobbies, and can teachers be found who will share enthusiasm for such activities?

12. Are there recognized means by which a pupil can develop pride in self, school, and community, and through which he will develop a protective responsibility, opposed to the destructive activities of some individuals?

13. Will the middle school be considered the proper place for instruction in sex, human relationships, and drug abuse? To what degree?

14. Do the written objectives and philosophy of the school have as their foundation the characteristics of the pupils being served?

15. Will there be an effort to teach pre-set subject matter, or will the school honestly try to educate "the whole child," in all of his current manifestations? Aren't the mind and heart of the student equally important, incapable of being separated?

If the faculty and community, after pondering these questions, find that their answers can best be exemplified in a middle school structure, and if they are willing to expend the necessary vigor to put their answers into concrete and appropriate form and practice, then they are ready to move into the implementing stage.

At the base are the children. For, in essence, the middle school is simply a philosophy and belief about children: their uniqueness, who they are, and how they grow and learn. But meshing with all that we know of the children and their needs must be the program, which is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

The Program of the Middle School: A Comprehensive View
The Child Is the Curriculum Center

The school provides a variety of activities and resources that appropriately complement the distinctive personality of each pupil.

The middle school, as has been pointed out, serves a segment of the school population that is undergoing rapid and anxiety-provoking changes. The child, of course, must always be considered as more than the sum of his parts; the salient point is that, during the middle school years, the child explosively expands in all directions, but at different rates: physically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally. A program, to be most helpful, must take these parts into account.

The school experiences of such children – although they must always be consistent with the foundational aims of education – should be designed to meet their unique needs and interests. Drawing from the realities of society, the nature of the learners, and the landscape of human learning, it is deemed possible to fashion with some precision a design for an effective educational program.

Such a design, however, must inevitably contain within itself the answers to such questions as these:

What is the philosophy which will guide the school?

What are its goals?

What is the substance of its instruction?

What are its learning activities?

What structures and guides will assure the greatest success?

The middle school is still fluid. A variety of approaches is being used as administrators and faculties strive to achieve its professed goals. The materials described in this chapter, therefore, must be considered as suggestions, not prescriptions. Indeed, it is most advisable that each program be different in some of its details, for every program should be permeated with the coloration of its own local community.

Community Involvement

The community and its resources can conveniently, and advisedly, be involved in decisions concerning the development of a middle school. An appointed advisory committee consisting of principals, faculty members, staff members, students, parents, and representatives of diverse groups in the community should formulate the middle school philosophy, proposed goals and learning objectives, to which may be added a suggested program. There should be periodic assessment and adjustment by similar groups. (see Appendix D for an illustrative philosophy.)

There always must devolve upon the board the responsibility to approve or reject the committee's submitted draft. It can also, of course, insert additions, make deletions, and approve modifications.

Middle School Goals

In implementing a philosophy, and building upon the described characteristics of the pupils enrolled, several observers have categorized as follows some of the appropriate goals of the middle school.

Self-direction. The child must be encouraged to develop wholesome attitudes toward himself, to discover and accept his strengths and weaknesses, to increase his mental and physical abilities to their full potential, to make rational and responsible decisions, to understand and develop a tentative system of values, to begin to prize himself as a thinking individual with worthwhile opinions and values, and to become aware of the bonds between his emotional needs and his value needs. The school can itself exemplify spiritual dimensions continuously in all of its actions: it can illustrate the force of reason, the power of dominating purpose, the maintenance of faith with accompanying courage and optimism.

Social competence. The emphasis should be placed on interpersonal relationships, wholesome attitudes toward others, effective group working relationships, social and political concepts, desirable social attitudes, effective citizenship, respect for differences in people and opinions, and the brotherhood of men.

Skills in learning. Those are principally, but not exclusively, communication skills, study skills, manipulative skills, and sensory skills. Students should find that "learning" is a

pleasurable experience, worthy of being continued throughout life.

Formal thought. The twin goals are the inter-relationships among disciplines and the relationships of broad concepts to personal life styles.

Creativeness. Goals include the consideration of a variety of options, critical thinking, experiencing new ideas, and the awareness of one's own creative potential. A youngster's vision can be as much a prediction of his future as is his native endowment.

Health. Included are the understanding of causes of sickness and injuries, the principles of wholesome growth and development, and the characteristics of physical maturation.

Principles Related to a Middle School Program

There is little doubt that a teacher behaves in the classroom according to what he believes are the important functions of the school.

The nature of the enrolled pupils, the philosophy, and the goals of the middle school lead inexorably to several relevant principles important in the construction of any learning program. Admittedly significant are these:

Learning activities, because of the nature of the children, must be filled with action and purpose, and must build upon the natural inquisitiveness and limitless energy of this age level.

The school must provide learning opportunities in three major areas: personal development, skills for continual learning, and experiences with organized disciplines.

The progression and variety of learning experiences must articulate comfortably with the basic elementary school structure and the high school program. Undoubtedly such articulation will make advisable a variety of techniques, among which may be traditional and flexible scheduling, cooperative and team teaching, individualized instruction, independent study, and tutorial programs.

Schedules must be flexible, yet cognizant of the almost unstructured and unrostered character of the elementary schools as well as of the highly specialized character of comprehensive high schools.

Since middle schools cover the age when pupils are rapidly changing from children to young adults, *the curriculum must provide for a high degree of individualization* to accommodate the different rates of change.

Continuous progress, not competition, must be emphasized. Experiences must reinforce identity and self-image to provide a feeling of worth.

The emergent strong influence of the peer group must be recognized in all parts of the program.

Real efforts must be made in fostering the ability to operate without direct supervision by guiding pupils actually to conduct and have a voice in some of their learning situation.

Learning Activities in the Middle School

Learning activities form the bridge or contact between a school's philosophy, goals, and objectives on one hand, and boys and girls on the other.

In the middle school, learning activities fall along a continuum, with an individual pattern for each boy and girl. At one extreme are society's requirements for a literate, vocationally-functional citizenship, and at the opposite end lie the individual's rights to his own interests and personal development. What had been an "extra" in the conventional school has now emerged as an integral part of the middle school's curriculum.

In some instances graded sequences exist, and they must, for many relatively unstructured experiences may possess essential, rather than optional, properties for an individual at a particular time or in a significant phase of development. All learning activities, however, stem from clear-cut, relevant objectives, and include the evaluation of pupil progress toward their attainment. Administrative arrangements permit the pupil to move into and out of activities and learning groups whenever such moves serve his needs.

School authorities now recognize the full educational validity of many kinds of learning activity in the middle school, through adequate financial and organizational support, appropriate staffing and supervision, and universal opportunity for participation. Faculty and students, together, design, regularly evaluate and revise all, rather than just a few, learning activities. Through guidance and teacher advisers a continual effort is made to assure each boy and girl the best possible experience in every area that serves his interests and abilities.

The statements written above constitute more than words. They contain imperatives, in spirit and action, that impinge upon and influence practically all phases of the curriculum. They have meaning for curricular organization, teaching practices, learning activities, and instructional resources.

A middle school does no credit to its name and purpose unless it organizes in ways appropriate to the grade levels, ages, interests, abilities, and maturity of its pupils. Very frequently it will organize its program into three curricular emphases, as illustrated below:

The Academic Core:
- Language arts, including reading
- Mathematics
- Social sciences
- Natural sciences

Special Skills and Knowledge:
- Foreign language
- Fine arts and music
- Home and industrial arts and crafts

Interest Areas:

Individual and group work organized around expressed pupil interests, within the academic or skills areas, or through special projects.

With the increasing range of differences within its enrollment – which it encourages – it must devote special attention to developmental, corrective, and remedial programs.

In all fields, *concept development,* rather than rote memory, seems profitable. And concept development, and its broadening into generalizations, seem to assist in the integration of the various facets of single disciplines and fused fields. Actually many fields-especially in the esthetic areas and the language arts-social studies combinations – lend themselves to *interdisciplinary approaches.* It must be said, too, that the several kinds of interdisciplinary approaches – and the broader specializations desirable in the middle school-make various forms of *cooperative and team teaching* worthy of serious consideration. Altogether, all curricular organization plans must be relevant to the life styles – social, economic, and cultural – of the community, and must

encompass varied and balanced experiences in the *motor, affective, and cognitive areas of learning.*

As far as teachers are concerned, they will find it profitable, with this age-range of pupils and its craving for abstract thinking, to accent inductive approaches, inquiry and discovery learning, problem solving, and predictions of outcomes. Each of these approaches develops expansive thinking, creative and imaginative projection, and the application of previous knowledge in the self-discovery of new horizons.

Concentration upon rote learning will rob this developmental period of its special significance. Involvement is the real essential for individual growth. The middle school years emphasize activity. Learning will bloom profusely through such activities as:

dramatics
role playing
camping
student governance
laboratory experiences
research
construction projects
play days
travel
career exploration
service tasks
community improvement
journalistic endeavors
ecological improvement

Through these activities there will be immense growth in such life-needed capacities as communicating, observing, classifying, measuring, comparing spatial and temporal relations, making inferences, predicting, hypothesizing, defining, controlling variables, experimenting, forming models, interpreting, and exploring.

The school, however, must provide the resources that will make such learning activities possible. There will be needed current materials for research, basic and supplemental aids, multi-text provisions, a media center manned and equipped, special teachers in some of the greatly specialized areas, parent and community involvement, and adequate, wisely deployed guidance and personnel services.

The middle school years call for a school experience that allows a boy or girl to assume a variety of roles in order to measure his potential and define his aspirations in a tentative way. It is an experience that provides a wide margin for error and many opportunities for changed objectives and interests.

Carefully constructed goals and objectives mark pathways through a bewildering world that explosively discloses itself to the transescent. The school provides a variety of activities and resources that appropriately complement the distinctive personality of each pupil.

Organization Can Facilitate Learning

Organizational designs differ, but each has interesting features. Two recently developed plans appear frequently in Middle Schools. One is the "house plan", which is literally a school within a school. All grades are represented, and the pupils usually progress on a nongraded basis, with a team of teachers working only with their school. A variation is the "wing unit," usually consisting of four homerooms on one grade level with their teachers. The "wing unit," of course, can be part of a "house plan," if multiplied vertically.

Team teaching variations are likewise interesting. Especially in the fifth and sixth grades a kind of "cooperating teacher" arrangement is often used, in which several teachers, by impromptu agreement, exchange homerooms for specific kinds of instruction on a temporary basis. Another type of team teaching is that in which a number of teachers group together to teach a large number of pupils in one subject. The teachers, for example, may all be language arts teachers, but probably each will have favorite areas within that discipline. A third common arrangement is the team comprising teachers of many disciplines, responsible for the total, or near-total, education of a large group, spread over one or several grade levels.

The interdisciplinary team is gaining wide acceptance in Middle Schools today. Four teachers in a "wing unit," with aides, teach a hundred or so pupils in the academic subjects —non-academics sometime participate as well. Each teacher carries out some of the instruction in every area, but is primarily responsible for planning and in-depth instruction in the field of his own strength. He also acts as a counselor for about twenty-five pupils, using the guidance specialist as a consultant and a resource for problem situations.

Such teams either choose their chairman, with all members considered to have equal status, or they resort to differential staffing, with the chairman an appointed "master teacher," and with his associates bearing such appellation as "staff teacher," "neophyte teacher," and "teacher aides."

Academic Courses of Study Tend to Be Broad

Courses of study, in general, try to capitalize on the curiosity and widened horizons characteristic of the middle school age-group.

For example, *the "new" mathematics* is stressed in most schools. Pupils study the basic concepts that explain the rules and help to unify the branches of mathematics. Increasingly they experiment with mathematical ideas. They make discoveries, and acquire new insights into the ways in which mathematicians function.

The language arts and the social studies are rather typically combined. They usually are taught together by the same teacher so that the relationships which exist naturally between the two areas of study can be clearly seen. The literature frequently will stress themes, such as *courage*, or *man in his environment*, or the *development of a nation*.

The inquiry or discovery method is found often predominant in *science*. Materials, in large units, are often focused upon astronomy and geology (the earth's place in the universe), the life sciences (the plant and animal kingdoms, including man and his health), and the physical sciences (water, sound, heat, electricity, light, etc.)

In some schools a bevy of subjects has been combined in a course called the *Humanities*. English and social studies, as an integrated core, are penetrated and enlarged by their natural relationships with literature, music, fine arts, and the performing arts. The broad scope of the Humanities course enables pupils to see a culture in which men live, a culture that is built upon the interdependent influences of environment, institutions, values, and creative expressions. In reality, such a

course examines the development of national images through historical processes and progress.

A Constant Check-Up

Many schools place major emphasis upon their "common goals," which they hold before teachers and pupils constantly. They usually include emphasis upon:

– The importance of the pupil's own investigations that lead him to understand basic concepts in the various disciplines and especially in mathematics and science.

– The application of mathematics and language skills and of basic concepts in science and social studies to every-day activities and problems.

– The relationships of people and cultures to each other, to their institutions, and to their environment.

– The significance of organized knowledge, expecially of major generalizations in the various fields, to the understanding of people and their ways of living.

– The role of literature and the arts in the development of community and culture.

– The individual's mastery of such ways of thinking about and attacking questions and problems as will yield reliable answers and solutions.

– The enhancement of academic achievement through a child-centered focus

– An emphasis on significant ideas, not inert facts which are rarely jumping-off places for new ideas.

– Theme-oriented instruction, with the micropedagogy of textbook teaching giving way to the macropedagogy of underlying principles.

– A shift of emphasis from teaching styles to learning styles.

– The organization of the school into basic pupil units, of a size (usually 75 to 150) that permits all pupils to be known by a group of assigned teachers.

– The assignment of teachers to "block" functions as both generalists and specialists, thus encouraging guidance related to the entire academic core, but permitting instruction in their basic expertise and interest.

– Adherence to individually prescribed, continuous progress as the keystone of all instruction.

A Summary Statement

Benjamin S. Bloom, in his *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, has a paragraph that helps one to understand the main thrust of the middle school's program of studies. He says:

"Although information or knowledge is recognized as an important outcome of education, very few teachers would be satisfied to regard this as the primary or sole outcome of instruction. What is needed is some evidence that the students can do something with their knowledge; that is, that they can apply the information to new situations and problems. It is also expected that students will acquire generalized techniques for dealing with new problems and new materials. Thus it is expected that when the student encounters a new problem or situation, he will select an appropriate technique for attacking

it and will bring to bear the necessary information, both facts and principles. This has been labeled 'critical thinking' by some, 'reflective thinking' by Dewey and others, and 'problem solving' by still others. In the Taxonomy, we have used the term 'intellectual abilities and skills.' The most generous operational definition of these abilities and skill is that the individual can find appropriate information and techniques in his previous experience to bring to bear on new problems and situations. This requires some analysis or understanding of the new situation; it requires a background of knowledge or methods which can be readily utilized; and it also requires some facility in discerning the appropriate relationship between previous experience and the new situation."

Implications of the Middle School Program

Although the objectives of the middle school program of studies are fairly stable, attached as they are to the characteristics of the pupils to be served, there is *no one program of studies* that is used by all schools to achieve those objectives. And this is as it should be. There are many roads to Rome.

Nevertheless, one cannot study the programs and instructional approaches now used by successful and pioneering middle schools without being confronted with implications that demand decisions. The middle school administrator and his staff must provide answers to such questions as these:

1. What physical, intellectual, social, and emotional characteristics of middle school pupils are you going to use as the foundations of program and instructional methods?

2. Do all of your suggested program proposals fit into the over-arching aims of education? Which should be applicable at all levels of schooling? Can you defend each?

3. Are there present societal needs which can be better advanced by your proposals? Explain.

4. Are you able to write a philosophy sufficiently clear and precise to assure readers that only a middle school, unique in nature, could build its beliefs into practice? Try to do so, and test it with your friends.

5. Continuous progress, for each individual in accordance with his individual capacities, is one of the characteristic aims of the middle school. Describe the flexibility of schedule that will permit you to achieve this aim. Use a fictional pupil as your example.

6. In keeping with your total organizational plan, how would you handle such areas as foreign language, guidance, remedial reading, and physical education?

7. What are some of the aspects of the pupil activities which will receive different treatment than would be provided in the secondary school? What different treatments do you propose?

8. In your organizational scheme, where would each of the following fit: programmed learning, interdisciplinary team teaching, single-subject team teaching, differentiated staffing, in-service programs, self-contained classroom, unified arts, block scheduling, modular scheduling, a house plan, and tutorial instruction?

9. The way a course of study is written has many implications for teachers' techniques. Take one subject and write its organization. What methods are built into it, as you framed it?

10. Would you attempt, in a nongraded organization with continuous progress, to move some persons into high school with less than three years of attendance in the middle school, and to hold others, with honor, for more than three years?

11. From your knowledge of the middle school child, and your understanding of the objectives of the program, what would be your recommendations concerning a marking system for report cards? In comparison with letter grades, what sorts of information are of equal or greater value?

12. A middle school must be judged on the bases of its philosophy and its objectives. How different will be the schools in city areas as contrasted with those in residential suburban areas and in rural areas?

13. How does the middle school's philosophy react to varsity athletics, graduation exercises, and such activities as marching bands? Why?

14. How can one "slow up" the social development of middle schoolers through the activity program? Explain.

15. Will the employed teachers be sufficiently interested in an evolving program built upon the characteristics and needs of children to seek consciously to mingle and talk with children after school, in school, before school, and in unstructured time?

CHAPTER IV

The Middle School Staff: The Essential Element
Faculty Is Success Agent

No school can be better than the faculty and its supporting staff.

In the final analysis it is the *faculty, including administrators,* who determine how effectively the building and its program meet the needs and characteristics of the middle school population. No school can be better than the faculty and its supporting staff.

One prominent educator potently expressed this same thought when he said. "All plans for educational reforms depend on the teacher for their proper realization. Unless carried out by personnel sincerely imbued with the philosophy animating the reforms and trained in the arts of effective teaching, they are doomed to failure. . . The teacher is the kingpin of the educational situation. He makes or breaks programs."

Herein lies the dilemma – the major obstacle – of the middle school. The middle school claims the right to exist – even the necessity of its existence – on the basis that it serves the needs of transescents who are as distinct in their characteristics and needs as are the pupils of the elementary schools and the students of the high schools. Without knowledgeable and prepared teachers and principals who eagerly desire to provide the kind of education best suited to the age-group, a successful middle school is practically an impossibility.

The colleges and universities have in the past rarely been helpful. Few programs exist, either on an undergraduate or graduate level, to prepare teachers or principals specifically for middle school instruction and organization. They have seemingly taken the view – as they did almost universally in the case of the junior high schools – that either elementary-prepared or secondary-prepared teachers could effectively handle the situation. They have, in effect, denied or at least disregarded the research of their own scholars that there exist there distinct age-groupings within the public school structure, and that each grouping, because of its distinctive characteristics and needs, requires a teaching staff specifically prepared to work in one particular segment of the educational ladder.

Yet, despite the general lack of preparation institutions and programs, good middle schools have emerged and have established successful patterns of instruction and organization. Credit for such pilot successes must go to dedicated and discerning educators who have seen needs, developed adaptive objectives and practices, and used imaginative approaches to resolve emergent conditions. For the middle school to acquire the stability that will permit its popular acceptance, however, both colleges and state departments of education will have to develop supportive preparation programs and certification standards.

One cannot study the pupil characteristics and the program imperatives as described in previous chapters without seeing clearly that the middle school requires a teaching staff uniquely prepared. The preparation typically provided for an elementary teacher or a high school teacher does not have middle school instruction as its target.

A Distinctive Undergraduate Preparation Is Essential

What kind of teacher is needed for the middle school? There are many personal perquisites which seem to presage desirable qualities of relationships and rapport. Professional attributes, especially applicable to innovative practices and teamed procedures, are indicated. Broader spectra of interdisciplinary connections must be considered. What demands – to a marked degree distinctive in nature – might be made upon a middle-school teacher, and therefore probably should be incorporated in his preparation?

- Certainly the preparation should reflect what is known about the developmental stage known as transescence: its physical, intellectual, psychological, social, and emotional aspects, and how it differs from childhood and adolescence.
- Emphasis must be placed upon the learning processes appropriate to the age of the learners – and such processes should be utilized both as means and as ends.
- There must be an understanding of the broad societal and individual objectives of education extending from nursery school through college, with special attention placed upon the contributions which middle school education can provide for the continuum.
- The construction of curricula based upon both ultimate and immediate objectives, adaptable to the nature of the learners, and useable within various organizational structures, is a task that the prospective middle-school teacher should learn to perform.
- Experiences must be provided in the undergraduate years in observing and practicing instructional and diagnostic methodologies appropriate to middle-school learners and to a wide array of purposes.
- There should be some college classes where learning materials are integrated and correlated, rather than compartmentalized. A possibility is a *professional seminar,* extending over a number of semesters, in which the professional areas of human development, learning theory, teaching strategies, guidance practices, psychology, foundations and philosophy of education, and middle school organization and curriculum might be studied in a fully-integrated fashion. A seminar of this kind would demonstrate the advantages – almost the necessity – of team-teaching techniques, a pattern that is particularly useful and applicable in middle school organizational patterns.
- Some of the general education and liberal studies should be comparatively unstructured and of an interdisciplinary nature – taught by teams, with such courses designed to help students understand themselves, to comprehend the process of thinking, to perceive underlying structural principles and their ancillary applications and implications, and to develop mature and humane values as they investigate the nature of man and his relationship to his societal and physical environment.
- Each future middle school academic studies teacher should supplement a broad general background with

concentrations in two or more allied disciplines, with sufficient depth to produce fluency and skills in both content and structure. Popular combinations will be English-Social Studies and Mathematics-Science. The major-field specializations should reveal to the prospective teacher *how* to structure the discipline to increase pupil understanding, *why* certain learning experiences are valuable, and *what* learning experiences invariably produce anticipated results.

• Because reading difficulties and developmental opportunities are in their most malleable and susceptible stages in the middle school, all middle school teachers should consider themselves to be reading teachers, and their undergraduate preparation should enable them to accept reading responsibilities with comfort and equanimity. The mathematics teacher, for example, realizing that number skills are profoundly influenced by the ability to read and comprehend mathematical problems, must be prepared to use his materials for reading-development purposes. Likewise, the health instructor, the unified-arts teacher, or any user of study or recreational reading materials involving specialized vocabulary, reading styles and speeds, and symbolic or graphic representations. Every teacher should be prepared to work with children in groups and as individuals, at many different reading levels. He should be familiar, too, with study and recreational reading materials suitable for different reading levels of ability and interest. Of course, there will at times occur instances of such severe reading disabilities that the assistance and consultation of a reading specialist are advisable. Every teacher should be prepared to recognize such instances when they appear.

• In any teacher-preparation program, the methods class assumes crucial importance. It must demonstrate the truth that learning can be exciting, active, creative, and joyful. It is probable that this conception of learning, so essential for the success of the middle school, can best become a permeative influence upon a future middle school teacher if behavioral and attitudinal changes are sought as major evaluative measures.

• The student-teaching experience must be regarded as the culmination of the future middle school teacher's preparation. But to obtain from the experience its potential maximum value, care must be exercised in placement. The experience must be supportive of the distinctive philosophy, principles, practices, and basic foundations of middle school instruction. Otherwise it will undermine – even destroy – all that the undergraduate preparation program has tried to build.

• The college supervisors who oversee the student-teaching experience must be experienced and successful teachers of young adolescents. They must be familiar with trends of teaching and learning in the middle schools. They must be skilled in human relations, able to work tactfully and constructively with the student teacher, the cooperating teacher, and middle school personnel. Above every other qualification, they must be sincerely, fully, and knowledgeably committed to the middle school as a philosophy and as an institution.

Some schools have found great value in having the college supervisor, during the student teaching experience, conduct a weekly seminar, often in an accessible middle school center, in which student teachers can share their on-going problems and resources, and can be assisted in the analysis and evaluation of their experiences.

Middle School Teachers Are Needed Now

It is apparent that the middle school has arrived as a permanent fixture on the educational scene. More than 2,000 are now in existence – and yet colleges and universities which prepare teachers for the middle school unit are exceedingly rare, and few states have built into their certification procedures the distinctive standards that are implied in the nature of the new institution. Hence the task of the principal in selecting a staff to implement effectively the philosophy of the middle school does indeed bristle with difficulties.

Some criteria he might use in selecting middle school teachers are:

1. *The middle school teacher should understand and accept (but not necessarily agree with) the various values, cultures, and life-styles which have become a part of our society.* The teacher must be seen by students in transescence as a person who can understand and feel the importance of their values and the significance of their questioning.

2. *The middle school teacher should be skilled in personal-social guidance.* He knows that youngsters are likely to share their problems with a teacher with whom they can identify. He knows how to help individuals and groups understand themselves and others, and he can help them solve many of their common and immediate problems.

3. *The middle school teacher should have the scholastic ability and the teaching skills to work with children in more than one content area.* He sees the interrelationships of disciplines, and realizes that the pupils' stage of development encourages the broadening of horizons and the development of general and basic skills, information, and concepts. His interdisciplinary background helps to make learning more relevant and meaningful.

4. *The middle school teacher should be a reading reading teacher* able to identify reading problems and to increase and improve reading skills, especially those related to his interdisciplinary background.

5. *The middle school teacher should be able to work cooperatively with others in teams.* He is alert to the enhanced learning possibilities in team organization and can contribute positively and agreeably with his colleagues in structuring an improved learning environment. He is aware, too, that team-teaching tends to sharpen the proficiency of each participating teacher.

6. *The middle school teacher should be interested in values and valuing.* As his students reconsider old values and examine prospective ones, he is able to help students analyze related factors and possible consequences. He should be able to show how learning affects values and how values are a conditioning factor in learning.

7. *The middle school teacher should be skilled in identifying and using varied learning materials and resources.* He is familiar with all major instructional media. He can develop needed "software" materials. He knows the resources, the literature, and the specialized equipment which are identified with his several disciplines.

8. *The middle school teacher should not be textbook-bound.* He is skilled in helping students to use a variety of sources and experiences in gaining skills and information.

9. *The middle school teacher should be sensitive to peer relationship among his students.* He knows that peer relationships are strong at this age, and can, with skill, be utilized in structuring desirable appreciations and cooperative modes of learning.

10. Finally and importantly, of course, *the teacher should want to join the middle school enterprise,* to become, in a sense, a new kind of teacher, to become a part of a team, to work often in an urban milieu, to help prepare a fluid program, and to be at the current cutting edge of education.

The In-Service Development of Middle School Teachers

Because certification standards and preparation programs, specifically built for middle school teachers, are either rare or non-existent, middle school principals of necessity must convert elementary and high school teachers into professionals who are able to fit effectively into the program and who are committed in spirit to the tasks to be performed. The chief instrument the principals have at their disposal is the in-service development program, which should be continuous.

In the wholesome development of any successful middle school, the principal must be the chief architect.

He himself must know what a good middle school can be.

He must be committed to the middle school as an institutional form, with a distinctive character, a distinctive organization, and a distinctive mission.

He must consider his role to be that of "principal teacher," working developmentally and communicatively with teachers, students, parents, board, and community.

Always he must consider himself to be a teacher. Whenever possible, he should grasp the opportunity to teach a class, even if only for one period. In one sense, all of the pupils in the school should be considered the cynosure of his teaching efforts.

He must insert himself continuously and perceptively into the instructional life of the school. A middle school cannot be developed by bulletins from an office.

He must have regular and frequent faculty meetings with the staff, well-planned as to topics and lively with participation.

He must assume leadership in making vital the supportive and service ties between the community and the school.

He must so organize the school that every teacher has opportunities to observe all other teachers in action. Teachers try to teach the "whole child" but never do they, as individuals, get to know the "whole school" that is involved in the process.

He must be indefatigable in pursuing, and giving form to, his vision of what a middle school should be, for without the nourishment which his efforts provide, the vision must fade. No forward movement can be perpetuated unless increasingly participants see that objectives are being clothed with reality.

He must be immersed constantly in an evaluation process, discovering uncovered areas, new priorities, unmet needs of students, organizational deficiencies, in-service emphases, unfulfilled expectations, and equipment and material needs.

Under prevailing circumstances — notably the absence of prepared teachers — it is difficult for a middle school to spring suddenly into being, complete and effective in all of its hopes

and expectations. An in-service program – and the guidance of a dedicated, talented, and knowledgeable principal – seem to be part of the creation process. A middle school rarely emerges in completed form. The labor pains typically last long, for all – teachers, students, and parents – eventually are involved in the building process. The result however, is finally a community school – precious because all have participated in giving it strength, form, and direction.

Middle School Certification Is Recommended

A school can only be as good as its teachers. Yet intermediate schools in general have always been handicapped in their healthy development by the reluctance of accreditation authorities to acknowledge that students in the explosive stage of development between elementary school and high school require teachers whose preparation is focused upon their specific educational and personal needs, just as the preparation programs of elementary and secondary schools are focused upon the needs of early childhood and older youth.

The sad fact today is that principals are generally held responsible for goal attainments in middle schools staffed by teachers never prepared for or committed to the attainment of those goals.

It is believed that the middle school is here to stay. Its needs, in respect to teacher preparation, are clear-cut. That it is designed to serve with precision the distinctive needs of a particular age group cannot be denied, nor can the validity of its emphasis upon process, individual progress, interdisciplinary problems, cognitive utilization, organizational structure, and cooperative planning. Accreditation associations, such as the Middle States Association, are building separate evaluative standards for schools that lie between the elementary school and the high school, and by so doing they acknowledge that such schools are different, in objectives, practices, and products.

One conclusion is therefore inescapable. If the educational institution is going to be a permanent, accepted part of our landscape, and if its effectiveness is acknowledged to be dependent upon the specialized preparation of teachers, then both fairness and wisdom would dictate that undergraduates who hope to be employed in middle schools should be able to choose, at least within the public colleges, a program of studies built to prepare them effectively to perform the requisite functions.

Such opportunity would place a substantial base beneath the middle school as an institution, and would, more than any other one factor, give legitimacy to the middle school movement. It would also relieve the middle school of the second part of its double burden: to provide an educational program for transescents and also a developmental in-service seminar for its teachers.

A Diverse Staff Is Needed

Because middle schools are diverse in size, organization, and program, it is impossible to list categorically the varied personnel who can be helpfully incorporated into a middle school staff.

Certainly a principal will be a necessity, and very frequently will need assistance in the performance of his manifold duties.

The same condition exists in the classification of faculty. There will be professional teachers for general roles and for team-teaching responsibilities. It is probable that teachers will be needed for such specialist functions as teaching the fine and industrial arts; industrial, business, and home arts; reading, library, and media use; physical education; guidance; and foreign languages.

Many schools also employ teacher aides, often in substantial numbers, to assist instructional personnel and to lend help in centers dealing with technical materials and media.

The Implications of Middle School Staffing

It can readily be seen that staffing is a more crucial and vexing problem for the evolving middle school than it is for other segments of the school ladder. The cause is the relative scarcity of undergraduate teacher-preparation programs for future middle school teachers.

The middle school believes, with sincere conviction, that its role is important and that it houses pupils and programs which require the services of specifically-prepared teachers.

In its staffing procedures, today, it is evident that the district and the middle school must provide responses to such questions as these:

1. Have the curricular program and the organizational design of the middle school been determined – for without such decisions the deployment of faculty cannot be wisely planned?
2. What certificates must be held by teachers who can be considered for employment in the middle school?
3. How many staff personnel can be employed before the opening of the middle school, for planning purposes, and what should be their chief functions?
4. In an existing school system, will it be policy to absorb into the middle school structure those teachers who have been teaching the middle grades in the former organization?
5. Will it be possible to hold in-service orientation and planning sessions with contracted personnel in the months preceding the opening of the middle school?
6. Can the entire planned program and organization be put into operation on the opening day, or will the emphasis be placed upon stages and steps of development?
7. Is the principal a person with firm ideas concerning the mission and character of the middle school, or will he expect the faculty to recommend policies and their implementation?
8. Do negotiation agreements, already in force, include any factors which may affect adversely the group efforts needed for the successful launching of the middle school venture?
9. As a facilitative element in its future staffing, have the engaged teachers agreed to accept student teachers each year from nearby colleges, in order that a supply of additional middle school teachers might be later available?
10. Since few teachers available for middle school employment have been enrolled in an undergraudate middle school preparation program, what specific obligations are placed upon the administrator and staff of the school?
11. In a new middle school, in what ways might a principal demonstrate his skills as a "principal teacher"?
12. What criteria would you use in selecting teachers in the esthetic fields?
13. In your opinion, would a master's degree program in middle school teaching and administration be helpful? If not, what kinds of advanced-degree programs would you recommend for middle school personnel?
14. What proportion of a middle school teaching staff, in your opinion, should be men? Why?
15. Can an educational system be broader, deeper, more humane, more imbued with quality than are the people who are its architects and leaders? Can the quality of education be other than the quality of each of us who are engaged in the instructional process?

CHAPTER V

Housing the Middle School: A Facilitative View
The Building as a Learning Environment

All middle schools should be of a size that will permit each child to be known and understood as a person . . .

Not every middle school organization will have the advantage of entering a building built to fit its operational needs. Just as common – perhaps more common – will be its movement into a structure designed for a different type of school.

Of course, a building designed to facilitate a middle school philosophy and its related practices makes easier the attainment of desired objectives. Nevertheless, with wisdom, renovation expenditures, and resourceful "make-do", faculties can – and do – transform a wide range of school buildings into very effective middle schools.

There is no standard middle school plan, appropriate to all communities. Middle schools in design tend to be as individualized as the curricular programs they espouse. The philosophy and the educational directions approved by each school or district will determine design and facilities. The design should ease flow and assist accessibility of resources. The program should indicate, in respect to facilities, the degree and essentiality of their utilization.

The middle school as an institution, because of its intensely individualized curriculum and the flexibility of its organization, has encouraged innovative housing designs. Existing middle schools reveal differing emphases on large open spaces adaptable to varied purposes and activities, on self-contained classrooms, on provisions for team-teaching, on arrangements for independent studies, on non-graded or multi-grades systems, on schools-within-schools, and on utilization of technological aids.

Experience seems to show that each school ought to incorporate within its program – and hence in its facilities – a multi-faceted concept which will permit – and encourage – maximized attention to the individual needs and capacities of both pupils and teachers.

In designing new facilities or in planning for the alteration and utilization of existing facilities, efforts should be made to provide the following arrangements, deemed to be especially desirable in the middle school:

1. *A learning resources center readily available to all other instructional spaces.*

There should be included ample storage space for current and future programs, and for administrative, teacher, and paraprofessional use.

Some schools will want a single large center. Others may prefer a satellite concept to fit, perhaps, a pre-determined "house" plan, core curriculum, team approach, or "discipline" organization. In the establishment of the center, some consideration of pupil utilization ought to be included. Will students, as individuals or groups, use the center on a scheduled basis? Or will students have access to the center, voluntarily and at many times, for independent study? A decision on this question will set criteria for the learning resources center. If a single center is utilized, the facility ought to have at least one outside wall to permit future expansion if needs change.

2. *Spaces of varying size for use by large and small groups.*

Consideration should be given to different-sized spaces to provide for large and small group instruction and for different degrees of privacy. Movable walls, of course, constitute one way to provide for flexibility in the use of vari-sized spaces.

3. *Spaces for individual study.*

To provide opportunities for student work, committee assignments, and independent study projects, carrel and seminar spaces are needed. Decisions will have to be made concerning the types and numbers of spaces most appropriate for the study activities contemplated, and whether they shall be created within the classroom, outside the classroom, or in both areas.

4. *Spaces for private conversations between a teacher and a pupil.*

Either within or outside the classroom, spaces are needed to facilitate opportunities for guidance functions, evaluation conferences, and other pupil-teacher interaction.

5. *Spaces that can be used for instructional centers or laboratories.*

With an educational program that is activity-oriented, the middle school must provide spaces for instructional centers in music, language, science, fine arts, pre-vocational activities, and other locally-determined pursuits. All forms of pupil activity included in the total curriculum will make demands upon storage areas and adequate utility outlets.

6. *Adequately equipped spaces for instruction in the various exploratory or personal development areas.*

The personal development area encompasses the many learning opportunities which concern the individual student's development as a person, exclusive of the opportunities for counseling, the development of values, health and physical development, and exploration of interests.

For example, pupils should have available to them appropriate spaces for such activities as drama, dance, newspaper publication, and student government. An area, sometimes called a commons, should be provided for middle school pupils to interact with their fellows during unstructed time.

7. *For larger schools, decentralization arrangements, by means of "wing" or "cluster" organization, that will permit the school to be divided into smaller units.*

It is probable that middle schools, in enrollment, should try not to exceed 800 pupils. But whatever its size, emphasis should be placed upon decentralization into small units, utilizing wing, cluster, house, or other organizational arrangements. All middle schools should be of a size that will permit each child to be known and understood as a person, and will permit the community to build into the school appropriate learning facilities.

8. *Areas needed for administrative, supervisory, and faculty functions.*

Spaces must be provided for administrative, attendance, supervisory, and teacher planning functions. The spaces must

be adequate, available, and easy of access. Storage and protective arrangements must be made for pupil records. Work areas for the production of instructional materials should be provided, including access to art materials, supplies, reproductions, picture mountings, and duplicating processes.

9. *Learning potentials built into the site.*

Every site will possess its own potentialities, as well as disadvantages. The disadvantages of the site, of course, should be minimized as much as possible, but greatest stress should be placed upon the development of its potentialities.

Size is always a desirable factor. The New Jersey State Department of Education recommends, *as a minimum,* that every middle school site contain 15 acres plus one acre for every 100 pupils. Under this criterion, a middle school of 800 pupils should be on a site of at least 23 acres – and even larger acreage is desirable because of the stress on life-long recreation, intramural activities, and community use.

Frequently – but too infrequently utilized – sites offer such learning potentialities as skiing slopes, flat tennis land, amphitheaters for dramatics, stream and lake shores for science study, wooded areas for camping experiences, concreted roller-skating surfaces, flooded areas for ice skating, driving ranges and putting greens for golfers, playing fields of various kinds, and even opportunities for gardening, plant research, animal care, bird watching, and astronomy.

10. *Provisions for community use.*

Again, the character and needs of the community will be determinative in the decisions reached in this area. How does the community want to use the school? Does it desire meeting places, work areas, easy outside access? Are the grounds to serve partially as a community park, an area playground? Will adult education classes be held in the building? Will library services and indoor physical education facilities be open to adult individuals and groups?

Pertinent Considerations

Although not covered in the preceding parts of this chapter, these are pertinent comments that can be made in the form of questions:

– Since the middle school will have to exert forceful influence in the preparation of teachers equipped to work in its particular type of school, should it consider the inclusion of facilities and space that will permit it to become a kind of center with loose affiliation with an institution preparing teachers?

– Are there ways in which, through building design, the observation visits of groups of future teachers can be made more effective?

– Has the trend for individual offices for teachers reached a point that makes advisable such provision in building plans?

– If teacher aides and paraprofessional assistance are offered to schools in great profusion – and such is a possibility of the near future – are the planned buildings sufficiently flexible to permit their effective use?

– In this era of rapid changes, teacher and administrative mobility, innovative techniques, and sociological imperatives,

is the building so constructed (for example, with non-bearing walls and partitions) that it can quickly be renovated to permit different instructional modes and organization?

—Are provisions made, in building design and facilities, to allow orthopedically handicapped children to be enrolled?

The Implications of Middle School Housing

Pupil characteristics, curricular programs, and teacher strategies and competences — all articulated under the umbrella of a comprehensive philosophy and a community set of objectives — should give definite shape to the building in which teachers and pupils move toward the fulfillment of goals which they have mutually determined.

Yet no two middle schools are identical in design. The differences lie in the answers that are given to such questions as these:

1. Will the school be housed in a building designed for its specific program, or must a building constructed for a different population be used?
2. Have a sufficient number of faculty members been engaged early enough to play a part in recommending desired features?
3. Before building plans were approved, were definite conclusions reached regarding grade levels to be included, pupil characteristics to be considered, programs to be initiated, instructional strategies to be promoted, and teacher competencies to be utilized?
4. Have the requirements and recommendations concerning the construction of school buildings in New Jersey, as contained in *Schoolhouse Planning and Construction: A Guide*, published by the New Jersey State Department of Education, been carefully studied?
5. Does the design permit wholesome decentralization of administration, with consequent advantages of intimate counseling and relationships?
6. Is every feature of the building a promoter of the learning process?
7. Does the structure permit an organization that can articulate closely with the elementary school, and yet also permit close organizational articulation with the high school?
8. How much flexibility is built into the structure, to accommodate innovative practices that may arise in the future?
9. If substantial enrollment increases occur later, have decisions been made as to how such growth will be housed?
10. As site development is planned, what educational objectives and activities can, with prevision, be furthered?

CHAPTER VI

The Middle School Studies Itself: An Evaluative Self-Study Objectives Indicate Self-Assumed Accountability

Evaluation must be a continuous process.

As has previously been said, the middle school is destined to be a permanent segment of the educational structure in many school districts. But admittedly it is fluid in design, varied in its curricular patterns, and diverse in its organizational structure and staffing arrangements. The buildings which house them are remarkably unstandardized. Even the grades contained therein have differing spans. The only element that seems to maintain consistency in the middle school, as an institution, is the insistence that it serve the needs and meet the characteristics of an age-range extending from pre-puberty to early adolescence and that it contain an instructional program appropriate to the physical, social, psychological, and intellectual singularities of its students.

How can one evaluate a school that confessedly has only one large standardized element – and that element in the form of a purpose? The only way one can do it is to make the purpose the base of the evaluation.

Then the method – the process – emerges with clarity. The process becomes basically that of self-study, with the school community assessing its degree of success in reaching toward the attainment of its expressed goals. Every self-study, of course, will be conditioned by the youthfulness of the middle school concept, by the lack of standardized features, by the encouraged use of innovative (and frequently untested) practices, and by previously determined local decisions concerning organization, staffing, scheduling, curriculum, and building features.

Self-study is in essence a means of measuring the degree of success one has obtained in meeting the responsibilities personally and institutionally assumed with the adoption of a philosophy and its expressed and implied goals. It is self-assumed accountability.

Since the only justification for evaluation is that it leads directly to more effective learning and teaching, it follows that evaluation must be applied to the further improvement of the learning situation in ways consistent with identified objectives. Evaluation must be a continuous process.

A Self-Study Decalogue

A faculty, or total school community, in any self-study process, has to assess itself, in some manner, against the following decagonal series of questions:

1. Has the school, in all of its aspects, been faithful to its accepted philosophy, with its related objectives?
2. Has the curriculum been adapted effectively to meet the known needs of children of middle-school age?
3. Have the instructional practices been responsive to both philosophic and research recommendations?
4. Has the staff grown, through in-service provisions, in the ability to achieve the school's goals, as an inter-related team?
5. Has the school organization been adapted effectively to meet, in the best manner, student needs and characteristics, through the deployment of staff, scheduling practices, decentralization of responsibilities, and adequacy and use of facilities?
6. What evidences are there that students are achieving, in wholesome fashion, the school's expectations, with value structures which will help them to become the kinds of persons our nation and our world needs?
7. Is the program, in every conceivable way, closely articulated with both the elementary and the high schools, and also with the needs of the community?
8. In what distinctive non-traditional ways is the school meeting the age needs of its students – needs that were deemed sufficiently varied and different to require a new type of school? Have these ways earned equal acceptance among the total staff, the students, and the community?
9. As an individual teacher, what strengths have you developed this year that will enable you better to achieve middle-school purposes? In what areas do you believe, for the sake of your students, that you must develop greater skills and understandings?
10. In what ways, better to achieve its purposes, can the total school improve next year? How would you word its priority goals for the coming year?

Usable Self-Evaluation Techniques

The decalogue of questions, listed above, is open-ended, designed to promote long, continuous, and critical dialogue. Much of the discussion will have to be of a subjective nature – and subjective evaluation can be exceedingly valid. Yet the staff will not be fully meeting its responsibilities for continuous study and accountability unless it seeks constantly to obtain objective measures of its effectiveness. The following techniques are recommended:

1. Shadow studies: to enable the individual teacher to analyze his instruction.

2. Child studies: depth studies of individual students. Some of the revelations will produce insights applicable to a number of individuals.

3. Out-of-school observations: a real test of relevancy and carry-over behaviors.

4. Anecdotal records: episodes revealing growth or retrogression in performance and attitudes.

5. Interviews with students and with parents: instrumentalities for understanding and for counseling, with emphasis on co-responsibilities for progress toward accepted goals.

6. Role-playing: a technique influential in discovering and changing attitudes.

7. Creative activities and projects: indicative of individual talents and interests.

8. Comprehensive testing programs: helpful in prognosis, where weaknesses, difficulties, and strengths lie; in diagnosis, the areas needing focused attention; and in estimating growth in skills and cognition, through use of pre- or post-testing. Useful in measuring some aspects of individual and entire-school growth.

9. School-activities study: an analysis of quality and quantity of participation, by individuals and by the entire school, in school activities and in school-inspired community activities.

10. Use of instructional materials center: figures indicating use by individuals, by groups, by grades, by subjects, by purposes. Library circulation, with detailed analysis. Weekly use of individual study carrels. Utilization of instructional machines and media.

11. Frequency of community use of school facilities, and analysis of benefits: the role of the school in the encouragement of such use.

12. Amount of recreational reading by students: the development of life-long reading habits, as a school aim.

13. Growth in personal adoption of value systems: evidences that school instruction has accepted value formation as one of its foremost goals and achievements.

14. Tape recordings: recallable proofs of claimed progress.

15. Youth forums: informative and evaluative analyses of youth problems, concerns, and reactions.

16. Analysis of attendance records: indicative of student interest in the school program, and of parent-student conception of the importance of what the school offers.

17. Grade distribution records: evaluations of student growth – whatever measurement instruments are used – give clues, when analyzed in terms of class, groups, subjects, or teachers.

18. Dropout studies: although students are not of an age where they can abandon schooling, the rates at which they leave to enter private schools can be significant.

19. Follow-up studies: the opinions of students, during a succeeding year or after entrance into the high school, concerning the strengths and weaknesses of their preparation, as they view it.

20. Personal, group, and school innovation and experimentation: evaluation of results and decisions concerning the incorporation of discovered values into subsequent programs.

21. Student involvement: quantity and quality of student participation in the planning and evaluation of activities, procedures, assessment, and governance.

22. Maintenance, utilization, and interpretation of student records: their comprehensiveness, their value in the individualization of student progress, and their clarity of description and analysis.

23. Faculty morale: characteristics of the teaching group in respect to feelings of accomplishment, definiteness of direction, consistency of leadership, calibre of associates, and meaningfulness of mission.

24. Community morale: degree of support evident in the community for what citizens see happening to their children, as a result of the middle school's program.

25. Adequacy of physical environment and equipment: their effectiveness in advancing objectives, program, and organizational features. Under examination would be classroom space, vari-sized conference and instructional rooms, learning media center, auditorium, gymnasium, cafeteria, teacher offices, workrooms, and restrooms;

counseling areas, administrative offices, outdoor areas, and student meeting places, sometimes called a "commons" area.

26. Performance evaluation of instruction: through a variety of devices including analysis by students: "How could we have developed this lesson more effectively?"; by self-analysis, as teacher examines his own procedures and success; by supervision and observation, as conducted by principals or associates; by reactions of students as evidenced by inattention, restlessness, and antagonistic behavior; and by subjective and objective teaching devices.

A Good Picture of a Middle School

As a result of its self-evaluation, a middle school can voice sounds of satisfaction if the evidence shows that:

- teachers are very knowledgeable concerning the needs and effective motivations of students of middle school age.
- instructional experiences and materials are provided at the level of each student, and each student is encouraged to look upon education as a continuing process.
- a continued program of skill development extends from the elementary school to high school.
- first-hand experiences are provided to create curiosity, and to act as a spur toward more learning.
- an environment is provided for intellectual development and exploration.
- each student is helped to discover his own capacities and goals, and to achieve stability and self-respect.
- each student gains a sense of responsibility for his own progress and safety, and for the progress and safety of others.
- basic American ideals are taught and grasped.
- the school has cooperated with home, church, and youth organizations to achieve high moral and ethical standards.
- students are made aware of their responsibilities as citizens in each group to which they belong.
- students are encouraged to take active responsible roles in school and community.
- students are helped to acquire a social conscience toward their fellow-men.
- an understanding of the world and the contributions of various cultures are successfully promoted.
- wholesome attitudes toward worthwhile leisure experiences are gained: toward recreation, aesthetics, creativity.
- every individual is inspired to maintain physical fitness.
- exploration of vocational and avocational interests is encouraged.

Self-Study Encourages Hypotheses-Testing

Through such study both the individual and the school grow – and grow – and grow. Presumably such growth – which involves new and tested knowledge – will lead to desirable changes on the part of both school and teachers. Education – and every situation within its processes – are crammed full of hypotheses, and new ones are begotten each time an old one is discarded. In every middle school, however, such hypotheses as these are ripe for testing:

1. Students in a middle school program become more self-directed.
2. Such students have fewer intense social and psychological problems.
3. Their achievement on standardized tests is better.
4. They are better in health and physical fitness.
5. They have better attitudes toward school and learning.
6. Their social acceptance is of a higher quality.
7. Their daily attendance is greater.
8. Their creativity and imaginative approaches to problem-solving increase.
9. They obtain higher grades in their ninth-grade subjects.
10. Their retention and passing rates in high school are higher.
11. Middle school teachers use, in greater degree, superior instructional techniques.
12. Middle school teachers receive a higher degree of success feeling.
13. In middle school classrooms there is a greater use of learning media.
14. Teacher turnover, in a middle school, decreases.
15. Teachers in a middle school are more innovative, more susceptible to change.
16. Middle school patrons exhibit more signs of satisfaction.

The Implications of Self-Study and Evaluation

The middle school that fails to conduct a continuous self-study and evaluation is derelict both in its opportunities and in its responsibilities.

Self-study, with its self-evaluative connotations, has these implications for the middle school:

- It admits tacitly that it believes it should be measured against its professed philosophy and objectives.
- It acknowledges its partnership with the community in the education of its children.
- It indicates its realization that it is on the "cutting edge" of improved education with constant study and adaptation essential.
- It emphasizes its distinctiveness as a community institution, different from all other institutions because of the singularities in the nature of its individual children.
- It admits its accountability to its supporting agency, with accountability stretched to cover a vast array of sought behaviors and values.
- It provides the machinery to lend direction to future growth. It is essentially more of a professional means than a required end.

CHAPTER VII

The Middle School: Issues and Conclusions Each School Becomes a Case Study

Although a member of a species, each middle school develops an essence, a personality, a distinctiveness of its own.

The middle school movement, as a comparative newcomer on the educational scene, has encountered questions, problems, and dilemmas, and acceptance has had to be earned. Today there is general agreement that the middle school, as an institution, can be an eminently vital and successful unit in any education system. Yet, because it is a growing, flexible, pioneering unit, devoid of binding traditions, each middle school becomes, in fact, a case study in itself. Although a member of a species, each middle school develops an essence, a personality, a distinctiveness of its own. The variety that exists in its sameness makes natural the emergence of both issues and conclusions.

Issue 1: Shouldn't middle schools be more alike? Wouldn't it be profitable to have one model, carefully planned, of which all communities could produce copies?

Conclusion: No. Its patternless form is the real strength of the middle school. It is community-oriented, and each community is different. It is traditionless, which makes it amenable to innovational techniques and organization, all aimed at more effective realization of objectives. It must be firmly stated, however, that all middle schools are identical in their foundation – and this is the factor that should be given greatest weight: all middle schools, in their varied aspects, drive purposely to fulfill the needs of a particular age group known as transescents.

Issue 2: Are innovations essential in the development of a middle school?

Conclusion: Innovations – whether they be techniques, procedures, practices, organizational designs, materials, or facilities – must never be ends in themselves. They are means – often untested but plausible – through which goals might be more effectively reached. The middle school, because of its newness and the distinctive characteristics of its specific age group, does offer an unusual opportunity to try new recommended practices. If effective, they will undoubtedly spread. If ineffective, they will be discarded, rather easily, because of the flexibility inherent in the middle school as an institution.

Issue 3: If innovations have, by their definition, untested qualities, isn't it safer, and better, in a new middle school, to avoid them, and retain the instructional, organizational, and facilitative forms used in other segments of the school system?

Conclusion: The answer must be in the negative. The middle school has come into existence because educators have insisted that transescents have distinctive characteristics and needs, that a different kind of school, a different set of objectives, and a different kind of instruction would produce better results. In other words, the middle school came into being as an innovation in itself, and as the container of new and more effective instructional means. Thus part of its reason for being is for middle schools to experiment with such innovations as block scheduling, modular scheduling, integrated subjects, team teaching, programmed learning, multi-media centers, decentralized organization, community involvement, non-graded progress, and individualized learning.

Issue 4: Can middle schools be successful, when they must depend upon teachers who, except in rare instances, were prepared to be elementary or high school teachers?

Conclusion: Many middle schools, despite the lack of specific middle school preparation on the part of teachers, have obviously been successful. The task of developing good middle schools has certainly been more difficult because of this condition. The successful schools have been built upon teachers whose records in elementary or high school have shown them to be imbued with the characteristics wich make for achievement of middle school purposes. The in-service role of the principal, and his conception of the middle school mission, have always a calculable effect. However, as teacher-preparation institutions adopt curricula designed to prepare middle school teachers, the task of attaining middle school excellence will be eased.

Issue 5: After the middle school's establishment has been approved by the community, and its program seems to be operating satisfactorily, are its difficulties thereafter fairly minimal?

Conclusion: Today, in the educational world, probably nothing should be considered minimal. These are community-centered schools. Even though evaluative self-study convinces the faculty that it has been achieving high results, the success and the continuance of the middle school will always be dependent upon what the community thinks of the school and its effectiveness. It is in this area that schools often fail. Parents and citizens are always going to be participant evaluators, either within the school structure or outside it. Since the middle school is essentially an exploring, pioneering kind of agency, it offers unusual opportunities to involve lay people, in the thrilling pursuit of greater effectiveness. The conclusion is irrefutable: the support of the public – and of students – must be maintained, and continuous efforts must be made to keep such support in the foreground.

Issue 6: Is it ever wise for a middle school to come into existence for reasons other than the better education of a distinctive age group?

Conclusion: Wise or not, it often happens, by decision of a community. Regardless of the factors which influenced the decision, however, the middle school – if it is to be a real middle school – should immediately involve itself into making the educational determinations appropriate to the age group to be served. What is involved, in this

instance, is the gratuitous opportunity for educational improvement, which the principal and teachers should seize.

Issue 7: Must a middle school be housed in a new building built expressly to assist in the achievement of its purposes?

Conclusion: A new building, so constructed, is certainly helpful. An imaginative faculty, with some renovative funds, can do much to achieve middle school purposes, even in structures which impose strident handicaps. The principal and his faculty are still the essential ingredients in any successful school – and the middle school is no exception.

Issue 8: How much should the middle school allow itself to be pressured from the units below and above it; i.e., by the elementary school and the high school?

Conclusion: Of course, the middle school is part of a unified system, and should so consider itself. Yet is must maintain the independence to achieve the goals it believes are essential in the proper development of its age group – and this independence applies also, of course, to the elementary school and the high school. With each unit faithfully pursuing its defensible goals, it becomes encumbent for each to accept the students sent to it, and to fit its processes to the students it receives. The middle school, however, in its constant self-study, should be sure to evaluate the articulation elements affecting its students.

Issue 9: Shouldn't all guidance and counseling, in a middle school, be handled by specialized personnel, and removed entirely from the functions of other teachers?

Conclusion: In an educational program that is built so completely upon an understanding of the individual child, every instructional moment exemplifies a guidance effort by the teacher. Guidance is continuous, and naturally is provided by the teacher who most intimately knows the student. Although every teacher in the middle school must be a guidance practitioner – and the promotion of reading skills is a similar "universal" – this does not mean that certain specific functions and services would not be referred to specialist counselors on the staff. In similar fashion, reading specialists have a legitimate role in a middle school staff.

Issue 10: Is it advisable for districts which have a junior high school to change to a middle school plan?

Conclusion: The decision must be made by the community. The junior high school and the middle school both attempt to meet the educational needs of the age group that lies between the elementary school and the high school. Many communities have found their junior high schools to be eminently successful in furthering the development of their transescent children. In such instances it would seem to be unwise to change – unless other factors intervened, such as overcrowding or ethnic balance. If, despite its successful operation, a junior high school is replaced by the middle school concept, the important thrust must always be to provide a program appropriate to the age group being served.

Issue 11: Do grades 6, 7 and 8 constitute the ideal enrollment span for a middle school? With other grade ranges, can one still have a thriving middle school?

Conclusion: The most common middle school coverage is grades 6, 7 and 8. Many grade combinations are in existence, and seem to be flourishing in respect to the fulfillment of their objectives. There are several distinct tendencies: the movement of the ninth grade to the high school and the attempts to obtain a range of at least three grades. Some schools have included the fifth grade, and even the fourth, partly on the grounds that girls tend to enter puberty earlier than boys. Of course, they adapt their instruction and organizational design to the grades enrolled. It must be admitted, too, that some of the two-year middle schools have competently overcome many difficulties they found to be resident in the foreshortened two-year program.

Only a few years ago books and articles helpful in understanding, organizing, and operating a middle school philosophy were exceedingly rare. They are now multiplying prolifically, which in itself is an indication that the middle school has met successfully its challenge and has become an accepted, valued, and growing step in America's educational ladder.

It is here to stay. Out of its traditionless present, its deeply embedded objectives, its imaginative approaches, its pioneering spirit, and its self-study evaluations will come much that will enrich itself, and undoubtedly will shower beneficial effects upon each of its contiguous educational units.

APPENDIX A

A Capsulated End View
Characteristic Comments Concerning the Middle School

– The middle school exists in a variety of shapes and sizes, but the variations have enough in common to constitute something new.

– Middle schools share a sense of freshness, of innovation, of adaptability, of coming a little bit closer to matching institutions to the needs and potential of children from 10 to 14.

– Some schools are wholly committed to innovation from team teaching to ultimate nongradedness, but others are fairly conventional.

– The middle school, as a term, usually designates a school in between elementary and high school, housed separately and, ideally, in a building freshly designed for its purpose, and covering at least three of the middle school years, beginning with grade 5 or 6.

– It usually presumes the existence of a four-year high school, containing the ninth grade.

– It tries to meet needs and abilities of between-age youngsters and to use – or anticipate – a variety of instructional innovations and groupings.

– It will not – it should not – replace the junior high school. The middle school is not the only route to better education for pre-adolescents.

– The middle school, although it can be fully defended on educational grounds, will often have its development fostered as a means of resolving social, economic, or administrative problems.

– Big cities especially, afflicted with *de facto* segregation, decrepit slum schools, Negro boycotts, intransigent white groups, and deficient budgets, may see help in accepting the new middle school.

– The middle school sometimes complements the neighborhood lower school concept, which serves a small, often homogeneous area. The middle school, larger and covering a wider area, offers opportunity for better ethnic and racial integration. The high school, of course, with its larger feeding area, is typically better balanced racially.

– Techniques, programming, and curriculum in the middle school will provide maximum flexibility of scheduling to care for varying learning rates, interests, and abilities.

– Stress is laid on individual study skills and related individual responsibility.

– Community oriented, the middle school is frequently used as a meeting place for adults, serving intellectual and social needs related to the educational leadership role of the school.

– The middle school's flexibility should permit teaching teams, various-sized groupings, modular scheduling, complete non-gradedness, television instruction, and programmed learning.

– Middle schoolers are fast-growing, restless. They like subjects or experiences like shop and art, in which they can be active. They dislike instruction that forces them to be sedentary.

– Science is important, as a mind-stretcher, in the middle school, as are such building features as language labs, central library, resource center, independent study areas, individual carrels, small and large teaching areas, team planning centers, separate house or wing organizations, courtyards, theatrical facilities, multi-purpose cafeteria, air-conditioning, carpeting, and demountable walls. A planetarium, in this age, is desirable, as is also a swimming pool.

– Although guidance specialists may be used, professional guidance, intimate and personal, is really the function of teachers and principals.

– An effort is made to slow down the children's social growth, while advancing them intellectually. It is believed that many of the high school social activities, appropriate perhaps for adolescents, encourage preadolescents to "grow up" too soon.

– The spaces in a middle school should be designed for "in-built second guesses." The atmosphere must permit mistakes. In fact, if the staff isn't making mistakes, it isn't trying – and certainly isn't imaginative.

– The school should protect the child against a sense of anonymity. He should have someone in authority over him – one who knows him by name and won't mispronounce it.

– The more teaching machines a school has, the more questions the pupils will ask. Teachers will always be needed.

– Within large groupings, there is opportunity for greater homogeneity, if cooperative or team teaching, with control of scheduling, is featured.

– Dr. Carter V. Good in his *Dictionary of Education* emphasizes the fact that the middle school, in cost, complexity, and learning skills, operates on a secondary level, like a junior high school, and is worthy of similar state support.

– In many middle schools formal grade structure is deleted, teams of students and teachers are formed, classes are not formally prescheduled, no one curriculum exists but many curricula, and facilities are adaptable.

– In the middle school, intramural activities should be emphasized, and interscholastic varsity programs should be avoided.

– The school, in its summer and opening orientation of pupils, can utilize a "big brother" organization, but in orienting parents it must make a total school effort, for parents need understanding of such topics as individual instruction, independent study, nongraded classes and programs, team teaching, curriculum programming, pre-adolescent psychology, learning theories, evaluation of student performance, communications theory, school activities, programmed learning, learning centers, and educational technology.

– To work most effectively in a middle school, teachers must learn how to work as members of a teaching team, to participate in student planning, to support students in learning activities, to conduct small group sessions in interdisciplinary discussions, to take part in staff development activities, to help formulate programs for individual and groups, and to handle evaluation conferences with students, teams, and parents.

– The principal in a middle school must be a masterful "principal teacher," for his major task will constantly be the in-service developement of his staff and students.

– Independent work by students can be assisted by work sheets, individual tests, programmed books, taped lessons, disc records, and research problems. It must be realized that individual programming is the most sophisticated form of departmentalization.

– The middle school aims to achieve self-learning and intimate and knowledgeable teacher-pupil relations. Self-learning is becoming ever more important because of the "explosion of knowledge."

– Using information as a tool is more important than storing it as inert knowledge. In other words, in the middle school knowledge utilization is deemed more important than knowledge acquisition.

– The middle school operates today in an environment of many subcultures. No one culture is acceptable to all. The school can play an influential role in ameliorating intercultural conflict in a transitional society.

– Social events in the middle school should not involve dating. The purpose should be to "mix" individuals together, with the hope of encouraging social graces and growth.

– The concepts, generalizations, and principles learned by a child result in a personality. This accounts for national, regional, and local differences in people.

– The role of the student is reciprocal to that of the teacher. He is not likely to acquire that which a teacher, by his actions, shows he doesn't value.

– Instruction must be consistent with an educational purpose, the contents must be relevant to the purpose, and the procedures must be appropriate to both purpose and content. Innovative techniques should not be used unless they are deemed to be better means of achieving expressed purposes.

– Physical education and health in the middle school can be joined, with attention paid to menstruation, sex education, veneral diseases, smoking, alcohol, drugs, weight control, safety, grooming, physical fitness, common illnesses, game skills, and sportsmanship.

– The classroom teachers, in individualized progress, must make decisions on what a pupil can learn on his own, in a small group, and in a large group.

– A middle school that provides for non-graded, individualized progress can justifiably provide early graduation, horizontal enrichment, honors courses, advanced placement possibilities, and longer retention for exceptional children.

– If field trips and learning expeditions are considered to be part of the curricular program, board funding should be provided.

– In the middle school the total range of academic offerings

should be more accessible than in the high school, where a degree of specialization is often required as a prerequisite to choice.

– The middle school is able to add an extra ingredient to excellence: the sharing of learning experiences and life values with other children of different races, nationalities, and economic status.

– Approvable physical skills, defensible in a middle school program, are those involved in soccer, baseball, dance, badminton, tumbling, aquatics, tennis, ice skating, gymnastics, bowling, billiards, and golf.

– Middle school teachers should have more specialization than the typical elementary teacher and more general knowledge of many areas than does the secondary teacher.

– Non-graded classes encourage team teaching. Multi-age groupings proliferate as middle schools grow in experience.

– Homogeneous grouping, by some people, is believed to be antagonistic to the concept of integration. Team teaching, programmed instruction, teacher assistants, and non-graded organization may help to avoid this situation. Heterogeneous grouping seems best suited to this pluralistic dynamic society. Frequently too much is left to chance in achieving integration; experiences and learning should be consciously planned to promote it.

APPENDIX B

A Middle School Bibliography: Books for Professional Study

Alexander, William M., et al. *The Emergent Middle School.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968. Paper

Here is an all-round text which reviews the history of, and rationale for, middle schools. Presentations of curriculum organization and a scheme for local planning are practical, broad, and clear. Curricular areas are personal development, skills for continued learning, and organized knowledge. New in this edition are the results of an extensive study of the pace of the middle school movement, trends and illustrative practices. Included are materials borrowed from several school systems, and a comprehensive, topical bibliography.

Curtis, Thomas E. (Ed.). *The Middle School.* Albany, N.Y.: Center for Curriculum Research and Services, SUNY at Albany, 1968. (Available from the University Bookstore.)

Addresses and reactions at a middle school curriculum conference the summer of 1966 at SUNY Albany, N.Y. Well-known curriculum specialists Gruhn, Vars, Beggs, Bossing, Clute, and Zdanowicz contributed.

DeVita, Joseph C., Philip Pumerantz and Leighton B. Wiklow. *The Effective Middle School.* West Nyack, N.Y.: Parker Publishing Co., 1970

A manual for implementing a middle school program. Procedures are recommended for assessing pupil needs, grouping, adopting new curricular practices, developing curriculum scheduling, plant planning, setting up guidance, and organizing activities.

Eichhorn, Donald H. *The Middle School.* New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, 1966. (The Library of Education Series.)

Using the forces which shape the child and his environment in a pioneering thesis, Eichhorn theorizes a concept of learning for transescents. From it he structures a curriculum model and demonstrates the necessity of adopting the middle school concept.

Grooms, M. Ann. *Perspectives on the Middle School.* Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc. 1967 (paper)

Here we find some of the people and the spirit of the middle school. Grooms discusses various organizational facets and provides a host of administrative suggestions. Particularly usable by citizens and teachers contemplating middle schools for their districts.

Howard, Alvin W. *Teaching in Middle Schools.* Scranton, Penna.: International Textbook Co., 1968.

Methods of teaching in the middle school. This text, best suited to undergraduate teacher preparation, contains many specific, common-sense suggestions.

Howard, Alvin W., and Stoumbis, George C. *The Junior High and Middle School: Issues and Practices.* Scranton, Penna.: Intext Educational Publishers, 1971.

A basic text on the characteristics of middle and junior high schools, recent and current trends in organization and curriculum.

Inhelder, Baerber, and Piaget, Jean. *Growth of Logical Thinking from Childhood to Adolescent:* an essay on the construction of further operational structures. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1971.

The Dean of Modern American Psychology details his theory through the transescent years.

Kindred, Leslie. (Ed.). *The Intermediate Schools.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.,: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968.

A collection of original articles provides an extensive coverage of the middle school and its operations, with emphasis on instruction.

Kohl, John W., William E. Caldwell and Donald H. Eichhorn. *Self-appraisal and Development of the Middle School:* An Inservice approach. University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania School Study Council. 1970 (paper).

A practical, diagnostic guide for educators and laymen to use to evaluate a middle school program. Each curriculum area includes objectives, program organization, content and methods, facilities, and evaluation.

Manlove, Don. (Ed.). *Junior High School/Middle School Evaluative Criteria.* Arlington, Va.,: National Study of School Evaluation (2201 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Va., 22201). 1970

Newly and originally prepared materials to assist a faculty appraise its school.

McCarthy, Robert J., *How to Organize and Operate an Ungraded Middle School.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1967 (paper). Successful School Administration Series.

Trials and errors in the establishment of a 6-8 school to replace a 7-9 school. Several stimulating ideas, but procedures appear to skirt sound principles of the change process.

Mellinger, Morris and John A. Rackauskas. *Quest for Identity: National Survey of the Middle School, 1969-70.* Chicago: Chicago State College, 6800 South Stewart Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60621. 1970 (paper)

Report of a mail survey of middle schools throughout the nation. It covers pupil-support, schedules, discipline, study arrangements, athletic and social activities, and exploratory course offerings. Highly recommended.

Middle Schools—In-Service Education, NAESP, Washington, D.C., NEA, 1969—a pamphlet

Moss, Theodore E., *Middle School.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1969.

An all-around first text on the middle school which is highly geared to emerging practices. Curriculum divisions are: skills; five common branch subjects; the arts; and health, recreation and physical education. Includes suggestions for guidance, facilities, and teacher training.

Partridge, John, *Middle School,* New York, International Publications Service, 1966.

Popper, Samuel H. *The American Middle School: An Organizational Analysis.* Waltham, Mass.: Blaisdell Publishing Co., a division of Ginn and Co., 1967.

An historical-philosophical-sociological defense of the intermediate educational unit. Wide-ranging and penetrating, Popper provides a substantial rationale, but with a prolix splitting of hairs in defense of the integrity of the 7-9 grade format.

, *School in the Middle: Divided Opinion on Dividing Schools.* New York: Center for Urban Education, 1967.

A collection of articles on the middle school in the city, and problems of urban education.

Stoumbis, George C. and Alvin W. Howard. *Schools for the Middle Years.* Scranton, Pa.: International Textbook Co., 1969.

Over ninety reprints of journal articles on the junior high and middle school. This compendium would save trouble and time in library research.

Stradley, William E. *A Practical Guide to the Middle School.* New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education (70 Fifth Avenue) 1971. (The Library for Education Series.)

On the basis of experience as a middle school principal, Stradley offers ideas for thought and suggestions to implement in developing a middle school program, some of which seem designed for the conventional junior high. The section on the expanded program provides a new emphasis. Included are course listings for several noteworthy schools.

. *The Transitional Years, Middle School Portfolio.* (Portfolio No. 4) Washington: Association for Childhood Education International, 3615 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. (20016) (Bibliographies)

A collection of fourteen leaflets on a limited variety of topics concerning the pupil and program of the middle school.

Vars, Gordon F. (Ed.). *Guidelines for Junior High and Middle School Education.* Washington, D.C.: National Assn. of Secondary School Principals, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., 1966.

A booklet and a sound-filmstrip outline positions taken by middle and junior high school principals at the 1965 Annual Convention of the NASSP.

Weber, Evelyn (Ed.). *Intermediate Education: Changing Dimensions.* Washington: Association for Childhood Education International, 3615 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., 1965 (paper).

This curricum booklet promotes strong attention to the personal developmet of each pupil. Broad guides for program development, for which examples are given, have special application to the first one or two middle school grades, but may also be applied to later years.

FUTURE RELEASES

Council on Emerging Adolescent Learning, ASCD-NEA. A set of sound-slide presentations suitable for pre- or in-service staff training program. Topics are: Operational Problems, Adult Models, Age Characteristics, Learning Strategies, Social Forces, Medical Study. (late 1971 or 1972)

Seventeen subject-oriented task forces in New Jersey are currently developing sets of materials in their fields. Many of these will include provisions for middle school programs.

Hausen, J., and Hearn, A., *Middle School Program,* Chicago, Rand McNally Co., 1971.

APPENDIX C

A Middle School Glossary: Definition of Pertinent Terms

articulation: relationships with the elementary school, designed to make transition into the middle school easy; and relationships with the high school, to make transition of pupils into that school comfortable and effective. Of course, articulation is expected also in the middle school, between grade levels and learning levels, and in continuous progress programs.

block of time schedule: a "block of time" is placed in the schedule, in which one teacher or a team of teachers teaches a class in two or more subject areas, with the teacher or team determining the relative amount of time to be devoted to each subject, according to a daily estimate of needs.

cognitive learnings: a term commonly used for academic learning of a subject-matter nature.

core or fused curriculum: in this arrangement two or more subjects are "fused," or integrated. Examples could be English and social studies. Problem and theme orientations often serve as the integrating design.

deductive learning: the learning process that moves from larger generalizations and principles to illustrative examples and concepts.

departmentalization: students move from one classroom to another, with separate teachers for each subject.

discovery learning: a type of inquiry, often emphasized especially in individualized instruction, in which a student moves through his own activities toward new learnings, usually expressed in generalizations and principles, and typically involving inductive approaches.

feedback: evidences from student responses and reactions which provide indications concerning the degree of success being encountered in lesson objectives. Teachers find feedback constantly in discussion, student questions, written exercises, and test returns.

house plan: a kind of organization in which the school is divided into units, with each house having an identity, and containing the various grades, and, in large part, its own faculty. The purpose is decentralization, closer student-faculty relationships, and easier and more flexible team-teaching arrangements. Frequently a vertical team-teaching plan is used.

independent study: work performed by students without the direct supervision of the teacher to develop self-study skills and enlarge and deepen interests.

inductive learning: the learning that results when individual concepts, in which examples, and illustrations, lead to larger generalizations and principles.

innovations: new instructional strategies, organizational designs, building rearrangements, equipment utilizations, or materials, from which improved learning results are anticipated.

learning media center: usually a large area containing books, audio-visual opportunities, learning resources of wide dimensions, independent study, facilities, and research materials. It is designed to influence both learning and teaching styles.

middle schools: the term middle school designates a school in between elementary and high school, housed separately and, ideally, in a building designed for its purpose, and covering usually three of the middle school years, beginning with grades 5 or 6.

modular scheduling: the division of the day into modules, typically 15 or 20 minutes long, with the number of modules used for various activities and experiences flexibly arranged.

nongraded organization: grade levels are abandoned, and students move upward in continuous progress, associating in every subject field with those who are at approximately the same point of development.

performance objectives: the purposes pursued by the teacher expressed in terms of pupil behaviors, which in themselves act as evidences that the purposes have been achieved.

programmed learning: materials built on a rational step-by-step development basis, usually presented in the form of a workbook or for use in a teaching machine, designed for independent study and learning. Emphasis is on subject-matter development.

self-contained classrooms: students are housed in one classroom, with one teacher. Variations may occur in such subjects as music, art, shops, and physical education.

scope: the term refers to the parameters of learning. A subject-matter discipline sets its own scope, often by grade level. "Post-holing," the selection of certain spots within a discipline for depth study, has a scope of its own, as does the "structure of subject matter" approach of Bruner, which stresses underlying principles attached to a subject. The "needs" approach has its scope set by personal, social, felt, and societal pressures.

sequence: this term refers to the organization of an area of study. Frequently the organization is chronological, often a movement from simple to complex. Some sequences are spiraled, using structure, themes, or concept development as guidelines. A few schools use persistent life situations to shape sequence.

subject-matter curriculum: in this organization the stress is emphatically on the mastery of subject matter. All other outcomes are considered subsidiary. The school may employ tracks, units within subjects, and ability grouping. There have been recent shifts from encyclopedic learning to structural recognition, from facts to understanding. But the center remains subject-matter mastery.

team teaching: a method of teaching which utilizes the strengths, and work flexibly with individuals, small groups, and large groups.

theme-oriented course: emphasis is placed on the principles that hold the subject together. The micropedagogy of textbook teaching is changed to the macropedagogy of underlying principles.

transescence: the period in human development which begins in late childhood prior to the onset of puberty and extends through the early stages of adolescence.

unified arts: usually refers to a grouping of subjects including art, music, industrial arts, drama, homemaking, etc., for which a time is scheduled with a team of teachers organizing the pupils into groups.

unified studies: a unifying theme is used to tie together many subjects. An example might be "conservation," which could attract contributions from many fields. Often team teaching is used for this type of organization.

unstructured time: unscheduled time used for independent study, individual projects, and open laboratory activities. The student assumes responsibility for his own learning.

wing plan: a number of classes of the same grade, housed in close proximity to each other, usually facilitating a horizontal interdisciplinary team-teaching arrangement. It can be part of a house plan.

APPENDIX D

Creating a Philosophy: A Sample

A fundamental task, regardless of the manner in which it is created, is the approval of a philosophy which will govern the operation of the school. And the philosophy should be more than words. It should, in its many essences, embrace a plan, capable of being implemented in all of its premises. An illustrative plan is reproduced below, not for imitation but for stimulation and understanding.

An Illustrative Philosophy for Middle School Education

The middle school presents a unique challenge to the student and to those concerned with his education and development. The student comes to the middle school with an ever-widening interest in himself and in those about him. It becomes the school's responsibility and privilege to guide him, not only in the education of his mind, but also in the determination of personal standards of achievement and worth.

The middle school age is one of exploration – intellectual, social, esthetic, spiritual, and physical. Each student should be given the opportunity to develop to his fullest ability in each of these areas.

As success is the best motivational force, the middle school ought to provide an environment without pressure where the child, not the program, is more improtant, and where every child is provided, appropriate to his level of development, an opportunity to succeed.

Self-realization is a key to the understanding of one's environment and to one's ability to function purposefully in it. The middle school must furnish a dynamic program of studies and activities as a basis for this exploration toward full potential. A middle school program, properly conceived, is not a series of hurdles which a child must jump, but a means to a far broader and nobler end: developing and increasing the self-concept of each student as a valuable human being.

The home, the school, and the community, working together, must assist the student toward self-realization, and his success will largely depend upon integration of these efforts.

The middle school ought to exist as a distinct, very flexible, and unique organization tailored to the special needs of transescent youth. It should permit, through program and organization, each student to become well-known in all of his varied aspects by a teacher or a group of teachers.

In brief, a middle school is dedicated to each of its students and to the proposition that it will utilize all of its resources in order to serve the best interests of those students.

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